

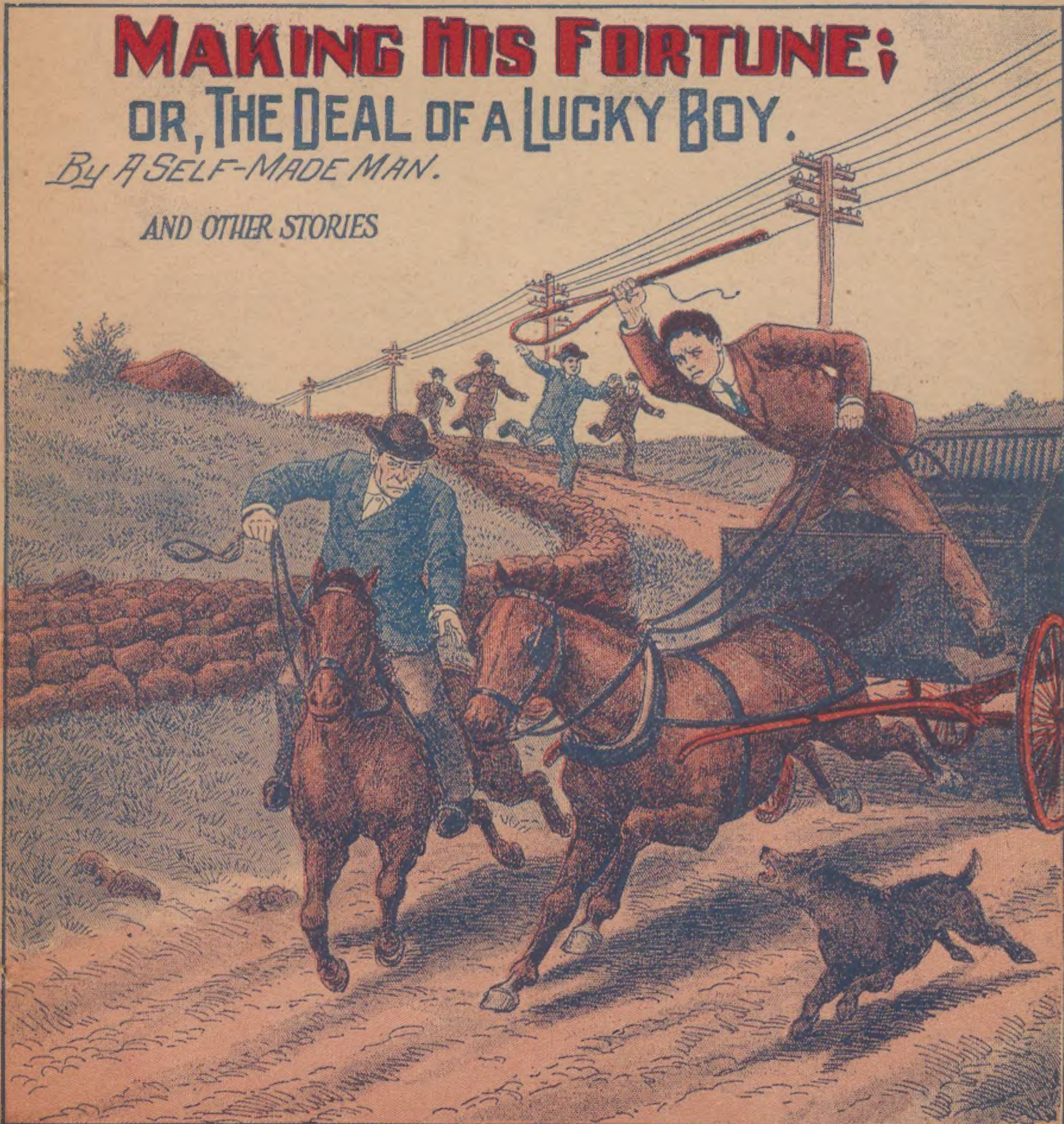
FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

MAKING HIS FORTUNE; OR, THE DEAL OF A LUCKY BOY.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

AND OTHER STORIES



The boy stood up in the vehicle and lashed the horse. It went dashing madly down the road, and the man on horseback came galloping up to its head, and reached out his hand to grasp the bridle and stop him.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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MAKING HIS FORTUNE

OR, THE DEAL OF A LUCKY BOY

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—The Race to Save the Train.

"Mr. Flint!" cried a plainly dressed, good-looking boy, rushing excitedly into the public room of a small roadhouse. "I——"

"What are you doin' in here, you young rascal?" roared the proprietor of the place, glowering at the boy from behind the bar where he was mixing drinks for two customers who had just arrived in a buggy.

One was a stylishly dressed man of perhaps five-and-thirty, whose dark, handsome face bore a rather sinister expression. The other was a thick-set man, dressed in a business suit, with smoothly shaven features that looked hard and repellant. They both looked casually at the boy as they burst into the room through a rear door. As the handsome man's eyes rested on the lad's face he gave a start, and stared fixedly at him.

"I want to take your horse and ride to the blockhouse, sir," replied the boy.

"What!" roared Mr. Flint, his red face growing redder from wrath. "You want to take my horse and ride to—— Confound your impudence! Are you crazy?"

"No, I'm not crazy. There's trouble down on the railroad track."

"Trouble! What d'ye mean?"

"Last night's rain undermined that big boulder at the top of the embankment and it's fallen on the down track."

"S'pose it has, what's that to me, or to you either? Get back to your work or I'll take my whip to you."

"But, sir, the morning express will be along soon, an——"

"What do I care for the mornin' express?"

"If the train isn't held up at the blockhouse there'll be a wreck and——"

"Let the railroad people look after their own affairs. They've got a track walker whose business it is to——"

"I'm afraid he's killed, sir."

"Killed!"

"Yes, sir. I saw his hat lying between the tracks, and his lantern smashed at the edge of the boulder, and something that looked like a boot sticking out from under it. I'm afraid he's under it."

"Under the boulder?"

"Yes, sir. Can I take your horse? It's standing in the yard."

"No, you can't," snapped Mr. Flint. "You go back to work or it'll be worse for you."

"But if the express should be wrecked——"

"Don't you dare argue with me, you young villain! What do I pay you for? Not to look after the railroad. What do I care for the railroad? Ain't they took a slice of my property away from me agin my will to put their tracks through to Cranston? I wish their blamed express would go to smash, and every other train on their line along with it," cried Mr. Flint, working himself into a greater rage. "They've sp'iled my property. They've cut my farm in two, and made me go to the trouble and expense of puttin' a bridge across the cut they made. They're a blamed, graspin' monopoly, and I wish——"

"If the express is wrecked the passengers will be——" protested the boy, with great earnestness.

"Will you go to work?" cried Mr. Flint, grabbing up a bung-starter and rushing at the boy.

Tom Tucker, for that was the boy's name, dodged the blow aimed at his head by his infuriated employer, and darted toward the front door to escape him. Mr. Flint, white with rage, pursued him. As the boy's eyes rested on the buggy standing near the trough a daring resolution took possession of him. His whole soul was enlisted in behalf of the imperiled express, and he determined to save it at any cost to himself. Seeing that the horse was not tied he rushed toward the buggy, sprang into it, seized the reins and the whip, and started the rig up the road.

"Here, what you are you doin'?" roared Mr. Flint, flinging the bung-starter after him. "Come back, d'ye hear?"

Tom paid not the slightest attention to him, but whipped the horse into a run. As the sound of the wheels reached the two men inside, the smooth-faced man sprang to his feet with an imprecation and rushed to the door. When he saw the buggy that had brought him and his companion to the house dashing up the road in the hands of the boy he swore like a trooper. He was a man of quick thought and action. He re-

remembered that the boy had said there was a horse standing in the yard. Without losing a moment he rushed to the yard, saw a horse saddled standing tied to a post, unhitched him, sprang on his back, and dashed out the side way into the road, and began the chase of the buggy at a whirlwind pace. Mr. Flint's horse could go some and the man lashed him to his best speed. Tom, out of sight of the roadhouse, whipped his animal and urged him forward. The signal blockhouse was a mile away, and he had a chance of reaching it ahead of the express. The sight of a boy standing up in a buggy whipping the horse at a run could not fail to attract the attention of the laborers in the fields along the road and a rush was made for the fence by many.

The spectacle of a man bearing down on the runaway on horseback, evidently trying to overtake him, aroused the field hands to a high pitch of excitement. They wondered what was in the wind. Tom had covered half a mile before he woke up to the fact that he was being pursued. Hearing the hoofs of the horse behind, which was overhauling him, he turned around and looked. The thick-set man shouted at him to stop. But Tom wasn't stopping for anybody at that moment. He whipped up his horse, and the animal made a fresh spurt. He looked behind frequently now, in some anxiety, for he saw that the man behind was coming up rapidly.

"He has no right to try and stop me. A hundred lives or more and a big train are at stake. I won't be stopped, and I'll let him know it," gritted Tom, lashing his animal again.

"Stop, you young rascal!" shouted his pursuer.

His words were simply wasted on the air.

"I'll lick him black and blue when I catch him," he muttered.

The exciting chase continued, the horseback rider getting closer every moment. Over a slight rise and down a gentle declivity flew the swaying buggy, with the smooth-faced man close behind. Four men working on the road looked up and sprang out of the way as the boy and buggy swooped down on them in a cloud of dust. The pursuer was now even with the rear wheel, and he dug his heels into his animal's flanks in a desperate effort to bring the chase to a finish.

"Stop, confound you!" cried the man again.

"Leave me alone. I've got to save that train," returned Tom.

The buggy wheel struck a stone and Tom was thrown back on the seat, narrowly escaping a somersault out behind. The pursuer was now alongside, a few feet away. The boy stood up in the vehicle and lashed the horse. It went dashing madly down the road, and the man on horseback came galloping up to its head, and reached out his hand to grasp the bridle to stop him. At that moment the whistle of the express came across the valley. The sound stiffened Tom's muscles. The blockhouse was in sight a short distance away. If he was stopped the train would pass on to destruction.

"I'll stop him before he shall stop me!" gritted Tom.

He raised the butt end of the whip, reached forward, and ere the man surmised his intention he dealt his pursuer a blow across the head. Staggered by the blow, and the shying of the horse, the thick-set man lost his balance and tumbled headlong into the road, while the horse, and Tom's rig, flew by with a mad rush, and disap-

peared around the turn that led directly up to the blockhouse on the railroad.

CHAPTER II.—Tom Saves the Express.

Tom Tucker dashed up to the blockhouse in the buggy just as the express came in sight around a curve half a mile away at a fifty-mile-an-hour clip. The horse was covered with sweat, and trembling violently, as he reined in. Springing from the vehicle he dashed into the small structure, ran up the stairs and flung himself into the second-story room before the eyes of the astonished operator.

"Stop the express," he cried. "Stop it. There is a big boulder on the track ahead, and if the train gets by you it is certain to be wrecked with loss of life."

The operator, who was bright and quick-witted, grasped his meaning before he had finished. He jumped forward and pulled a lever over. That operated the red painted arm of the semaphore signal attached to the top of a pole outside. The arm fell into a horizontal position, pointing across the tracks. It was a signal to the engineer of the express to bring his train to a stop within the block, or section of road between that blockhouse and the other behind the train, ten miles away. There was a bull's-eye lamp encased in thick red glass at the end of the arm which was lighted before dark, and carried the same signal at night, when the arm itself could not be seen at a distance. The engineer, who was always specially on the alert when the train approached a block tower, saw the signal at once. He whistled down brakes, pulled over the reverse lever, and applied the air-brakes to the heavy coaches and drawing-room cars behind. The sudden easing up of the train startled every passenger aboard. The conductor came to the side door of the baggage car, leaned out and looked ahead. He saw the red semaphore signal displayed, and knew that the line was blocked for some reason. As soon as the operator had set the signal he turned to Tom.

"What did you say about a boulder on the track?" he asked.

The boy explained the situation in a few words, saying that he believed the trackwalker lay crushed underneath the heavy mass of rock.

"By George, young fellow!" he exclaimed. "If what you say is true you have prevented a bad wreck. How did you get here so quick? The obstruction is a mile away, according to your account."

Tom told him of the race he had made in the buggy. He explained that Amos Flint, the man he worked for, had refused to let him take his saddle horse which stood all ready to go in the yard behind the roadhouse.

"So I had to run off with the buggy belonging to two men who had stopped for a drink," he continued. "One of the men chased me on Mr. Flint's horse and came within an ace of stopping me, but I hit him on the head with the whip and he fell into the road. I'm bound to get into a whole lot of trouble over this; but I don't care as long as I've saved the train."

"You're a lucky boy, and you shan't get into any trouble if I can help it," said the operator,

whose name was Dick Harker, and about twenty-one. "Flint must be a brute to try and prevent you from saving the train; and as for the man who chased you, he probably did not understand the situation."

By that time the locomotive of the express came to a stop in front of the blockhouse and the conductor came running up to find out what the trouble was. The operator was signaling the next blockhouse ahead about the boulder on the down track when the conductor came into the glass-enclosed room with its outfit of levers and other appliances.

"That boy will tell you what the trouble is," said the operator, clicking away at his key.

"Well, my lad, what's wrong?" asked the conductor.

Tom told his story. The conductor's hair rose at the thought of the narrow escape the train had had from wreck.

"Boy, you deserve a gold medal," he said, grasping Tom by the hand. "You have saved many lives, I have no doubt, thousands of dollars' worth of rolling stock, and the company from a bunch of damage suits. The officials shall be apprised of your gallant service, and you will undoubtedly be liberally rewarded."

"I'm not looking for any reward. I am satisfied in having done my duty. I only hope that Mr. Flint will not lay me out too bad for coming here against his wishes," replied Tom.

"Who is Mr. Flint?" asked the conductor.

"He's the man I work for. He keeps a roadhouse and small farm down the road about a mile from here. The boulder was on his property, at the top of an embankment. Last night's rain must have loosened it, and it rolled down a little while ago."

"Did Mr. Flint try to prevent you from coming here with the warning?"

"Yes."

"The blamed reprobate!" cried the conductor, angrily. "Why should he?"

"He's sour on the railroad company for cutting through his property."

"Sour, is he? He got a mighty good price for the strip of land the company appropriated for its right of way."

"I'll bet he'll try to lick me when I get back."

"Have him arrested if he lays a hand on you. Then show him up in court. Why his conduct was outrageous. His stubbornness might have caused the wreck of the train."

"He wouldn't have cared. He said it was none of his business, or mine either."

"I don't see what kind of a conscience he can have. The company shall be informed of his conduct, and he'll be apt to hear from one of the officials."

"I must look after that horse now, sir. I don't want him to catch cold, though fortunately it is a nice day. He did his best to bring me here."

Tom rushed down, took the blanket off the seat and threw it over the animal. The conductor spoke to the engineer out of the window, and after telling him about the obstruction, said the train would have to be stalled till the boulder was removed. That meant something of a wait, for a wrecking car would have to be sent on from Cranston, fifteen miles away, with a crew to lift the obstruction from the track, and the rails would probably have to be fixed, too. It

was about this time that the smooth-faced man limped up to the blockhouse, where he saw the horse and buggy standing. The moment his eyes rested on Tom he started for him.

"You young scoundrel, I'll fix you!" he cried, grabbing the boy unawares, and starting to pound him viciously.

"Hold on there!" cried the conductor, who was about to step into the locomotive cab.

He rushed forward and grabbed the man.

"What do you mean by attacking that boy?" he said, pulling the fellow away.

"The young rascal nearly killed me," replied the man, in an angry tone. "He struck me over the head with the butt of the whip he had while trying to get away in this rig which was hired by a friend of mine in the village beyond."

"Don't you know that the boy was trying to get here in time to save that train?" asked the conductor.

"I don't know nothin' about it. All I know or care about is that he was runnin' off with our rig, and I tried to prevent him doin' it."

"Had you succeeded this train would have been wrecked," said the conductor.

"Well, that ain't none of my business," said the man, sulkily.

"You're a nice kind of man, you are—as bad as the roadhouse keeper. Haven't you any respect for human life?"

"Of course I have; but how was I to know what the boy's object was? I thought he was tryin' to steal the rig."

"You know better than that," said Tom. "You heard me ask Mr. Flint for his horse so that I could come here, and you heard me tell him about the boulder being on the track, and how the express was due in a few minutes. I took the buggy because I couldn't the saddle horse, and I had to get here as soon as I could."

"That boy is a young hero," said the conductor, "and you ought to be ashamed of the part you've taken in this affair. He's saved the train, and I'll see that he gets all the credit he is entitled to."

The man growled out some words under his breath and turned away. Getting into the buggy he sat there looking at the stalled train, and the passengers and train hands. In the meantime the cause of the hold-up was circulated throughout the train, and a rush was made on the part of the passengers to see the boy who had prevented a smash-up further on. Tom was introduced to them by the conductor, in a speech complimentary of the boy's strenuous effort to reach the scene after encountering a difficulty that probably would have discouraged another boy. The passengers gave Tom a great ovation. They all realized that he had prevented a great catastrophe, and they felt grateful to him. Somebody suggested that a purse be taken up for his benefit. In a moment a score of hands dived into their pockets for bills of various denominations, and the collector soon secured \$200, which he presented to Tom, with a neat speech. The conductor had taken Tom's name and address to put into his report to the Division Superintendent without knowing that the operator of Tower 10, as the blockhouse was officially called, had sent his name in already to the train dispatcher's office at Cranston, with the particulars of the service he had rendered the road.

"I guess I'd better get back or I'll catch double jesse," Tom said to the conductor, who had just returned on the locomotive from a survey of the boulder where it blocked the line. "I've been away more than an hour now, and Mr. Flint won't do a thing to me, I'm thinking. I was hoeing in the meadow that overlooks the tracks when I noticed that the boulder was missing. I looked to see what had become of it, and that's how I discovered that it lay on the rails below."

"Well, my lad, don't you put up with any rough-house treatment from your employer. I'll write a few words for you to hand him. I think it will bring him to his senses, and he'll let you alone. If he persists in being ugly tell him he will get himself into a peck of trouble by ill-treating you for saving the train. The company would be sure to take the case up in your behalf," said the conductor.

The official wrote something on a blank piece of paper, addressed it to Amos Flint and handed it to Tom.

"That ought to save your bacon. Good-by and Heaven bless you for what you did for the train this afternoon."

Tom shook hands with him and slipped away before any of the passengers noticed his departure from the scene. The smooth-faced man had driven away some time since in the buggy, with the saddle horse tied behind, and Tom wondered whether he would have any trouble with him if he was at the roadhouse when he arrived there.

"He'd be a pretty small potato to give me a dressing down now when he understands thoroughly why I took his rig. It's different with Mr. Flint. He has an idea that he owns me, and has the right to knock me around as he chooses. Well, now that I'm worth \$200 he'll keep his hands off or I'll leave him and sue him for what he owes me if he refuses to ante up. That \$200 is a great windfall. I feel as if I amounted to something now. I'm independent for once in my life. That makes a whole lot of difference in a fellow's feelings. I was as poor as Job's turkey, as the saying is, when Mr. Flint took me on, and he's made me hustle mighty hard for every cent he's agreed to pay me at the end of summer. He's meaner than dirt, and Mrs. Flint ain't a great sight better. They're well matched."

Thus soliloquized Tom as he trudged along the road toward the roadhouse, with dubious anticipations of what was in store for him.

CHAPTER III.—Mr. Flint Wonders What's in the Wind.

Amos Flint was wild with rage at the nerve of Tom Tucker in running off with the horse and buggy, but was surprised a moment later to see the smooth-faced man come dashing out of the yard on his saddle horse. As the man went flying up the road after the runaway he saw at once that the chap was after Tom.

"He's bound to catch him on that mare, and I hope he'll shake the daylights out of him," muttered the roadhouse proprietor. "Jest wait till I get my hands on that boy, I'll give him the biggest lickin' he ever had. To think of him leavin' the work I pay him to do to help that bloated corporation that dug a big trench through

my property to lay its rails in. I'll larn him who he's workin' for."

Buggy and saddle horse being now out of sight, Mr. Flint returned to the public room to apologize to his stylishly dressed customer for the interruption.

"Don't mention it, sir," said the dark-featured man, who had not stirred from his seat during the whole of the excitement. "Bring me the cocktail I ordered, and another for yourself, at my expense. I want to talk to you."

The two cocktails being ready on the bar, Mr. Flint brought them to the table and sat down opposite to his customer, wondering what the gentleman had to say to him.

"Now, my friend," said the gentleman, "I'd like to ask you a question or two. To begin with, who is that boy?"

"That my hired hand."

"What's his name?"

"Tom Tucker."

"Tom Tucker, eh?" said the gentleman, apparently disappointed. "How long has he been with you?"

"About two months," replied Mr. Flint, much surprised at the interest the gentleman appeared to take in the boy.

"Where did he come from?"

"I couldn't tell you. I never asked him. I didn't keer where he come from as long as he was strong and hearty, and could do the work around the place."

"Didn't he tell you anything about himself?"

"Not a thing. He's as close as a clam."

"I suppose you think I show a singular interest in this boy of yours?" said the dark gentleman.

"Kinder," admitted Mr. Flint.

"The fact is he reminds me of someone I thought dead and buried years ago."

"Yes?"

"I would be willing to pay well for some real information about that boy, as I wish to find out whether the grave has given up its dead."

"I never heard tell of a grave givin' up anythin'," responded Flint, curiously.

"Such things have happened—in a metaphorical sense."

"What kkind of sense?" asked Mr. Flint in a puzzled tone, for the word was not familiar to him.

"Metaphorical—figurative. As I said I would be willing to pay well for information which would lead to the identity of that boy being established beyond any doubt. Couldn't you get him to talk about himself? If you can find out who his parents were—his real parents, mind you, for if my suspicions are correct his right name is not Tom Tucker."

"Ain't it?"

"I suspect not, for he's the living image of my—pshaw! What am I talking about? I may be wrong after all. However, I'm anxious to set my doubts at rest. You pump what you can about his past out of him, and then call upon me at the village. You'll find me at the cottage of Roger Pryor on Elm Street. If your information is valuable I will recompense you liberally. In any case I'll make it worth your while."

"I'll do it. But who shall I ask for when I call? You haven't told me your name."

"My name—well, ask for Rutherford."

"Rutherford—very good. You shall hear from me in a day or two. But," in an anxious kind of way, "suppose the boy is the one you suspect, is there any danger of my losin' him right away? He's pretty useful around the place and I wouldn't like to have him leave afore his time is up."

"You needn't worry about that—now. He may not be the boy."

"I s'pose so. Kind of curious he should have a different name if he was, ain't it? I never heard of boys changin' their names. I know several cases where boys have lost their fathers and their mothers have married ag'in, but they didn't change their names."

"We won't discuss the matter, Mr.—by the way your name is—"

"Flint—Amos Flint."

"Well, Mr. Flint, you attend to this matter and you sha'n't regret it."

"Yes, sir; I'll find out what I can from him and let you know. I'll question him tonight after supper. I reckon I kin get somethin' out of him."

"You mustn't use undue curiosity, or he might suspect you had some ulterior purpose and—"

"What kind of purpose?"

"Well, some special reason—some object in view—in which case he might refuse to answer, or tell you what wasn't true."

"Hum!" ejaculated the roadhouse keeper.

The appearance of a couple of farmers who wanted a round or two of drinks broke up the conversation, and it was not renewed, for after the farmers left the smoothfaced man drove up in the buggy and got out.

"Did you ketch the boy?" asked Mr. Flint.

"I found him at the signal tower," replied the man. "He got there in time to stop the train. The passengers were making a hero of him when I left."

"Huh!" ejaculated Mr. Flint.

"I'll take my cocktail now," said the man.

"I'll mix it for you. Did you bring my horse back or leave it for the boy?"

"I brought the animal back. He's hitched to the buggy."

While Mr. Flint was mixing the drink the gentleman and his companion talked together in low tones. The roadhouse proprietor tried to catch what passed between them, but he couldn't. All he learned was that the gentleman addressed his companion as Hawkins. Mr. Flint was extremely curious to learn why the gentleman, who had intimated that his name was Rutherford, and who appeared to be a man of means and social standing, was so desirous of learning all he could about his hired boy, Tom Tucker.

"There's some mystery about it, depend on it," thought Mr. Flint. "He said Tom was the living image of somebody he was about to mention but didn't. I'd like to know who that somebody is. He said he'd pay me well for any information that I brought him? People ain't payin' for information unless they're goin' to gain by it. Maybe he's a lawyer, and is lookin' for a missin' heir to some property. I wish I knew if that was so. Tom might be the missin' heir. I must pump him about his past life, and if it strikes me he's the person this gentleman is lookin' for I might be able to make good terms with this Rutherford."

Nothin' like gettin' all you kin in this world. At any rate I always look out for Number One."

The cocktail was ready by this time and he placed it before Hawkins.

"How much do I owe you for the three drinks?" asked Rutherford.

"Well, I dunno as you need pay for the one I had. Call it half a dollar," replied Mr. Flint.

The roadhouse keeper's charge for two cocktails was a quarter, but when he thought a chance customer could stand it he always soaked him double price.

Rutherford looked as if money was no object to him so Mr. Flint charged him accordingly. The gentleman tossed him a dollar bill and Flint handed him the change. Then he began polishing up a nearby table within easy earshot of the two men and strained his ears to catch what they said. His expectations were not gratified, for Rutherford had nothing to say while he was in the vicinity, and as soon as Hawkins drank the cocktail they rose and went outside. Hawkins returned the saddle horse to the yard, and then the two men got into the buggy and instead of continuing up the road, turned around and went back the way they came. Mr. Flint stood at the door and watched them off. He continued to watch them till a turn in the road cut them off from his view.

"So he's stoppin' at Roger Pryor's place in Seacliff?" muttered the roadhouse keeper. "He's the justice of the peace and a lawyer. It's natural for two lawyers to come together. It must be he is lookin' for a lost heir. Suppose Tom should turn out to be the lost heir and come into a fortune I'd lose him of course. I wouldn't like that, for he's a good worker. Maybe I'd lose a sight more than I'd gain by tellin' that Rutherford what I may learn from the boy. I must think the matter over considerable before I call on him with the information—provided, of course, the boy tells me anythin' worth while. I might be able to put two and two together from what I get out of him and drive a good bargain with Rutherford. It is clear he knows nothin' about Tom except that his face is the livin' image of somebody. That somebody must be the person who left the property to the missin' heir, supposin', of course, I'm right about there bein' a missin' heir. I don't see that it could be anythin' else. If he's a lawyer, as I reckon he is, what else would he be lookin' for a boy of Tom's age for? I've read a hull lot about missin' heirs, and lawyers lookin' for 'em, so it seems nateral in this case—here comes the boy now," as he spied Tom Tucker approaching along the road. "I mustn't take no notice of him runnin' off with that buggy, else he won't tell me nothin' this evenin' when I start to pump him. I must pretend he did the right thing to try and save that there train. Nothin' like bein' foxy when you've got a p'int to make," and he rubbed his hands together with a chuckle.

"Hello, what's he lookin' for in them bushes? Blessed if it wasn't that there bung-starter I flung at him. I forgot all about it, but he didn't. Mebbe he thinks of usin' it to protect himself when he meets me. His bump of caution is well developed. I'll surprise him by bein' in good humor. If you've got a p'int to gain you must play your cards the right way. To get some-

thin' out of a person I've always found you must rub his fur in the right direction."

The roadhouse keeper chuckled as he left the door and went behind the bar.

CHAPTER IV.—Mr. Flint Tries to Pump Tom.

Tom approached the front door of the roadhouse with some caution. He had seen Mr. Flint standing there a few moments before, had seen him looking up the road at him, and had seen him go in. Any other boy would probably have stolen into the yard, thence out into the field and have resumed his interrupted hoeing job till the bell rung by the muscular arm of the tall and wiry Mrs. Flint summoned him to supper.

Tom, however, did things differently from other boys. There wasn't a particle of cowardice about him. If he was in for a scolding he believed in facing the music and getting over with it at once. At the same time he believed in protecting himself as much as possible. He remembered that Mr. Flint had thrown the bung-starter at him and that it had fallen into the bushes by the roadhouse. He wondered if his employer had recovered it. Very likely he had, for it was an indispensable article about the bar-room. Still he thought he would make sure about it. Somewhat to his surprise the bung-starter lay where it had fallen. Tom picked it up and went on. He had no intention of using it as a weapon against his employer, but he recognized the fact that it was a very handy thing to have in case of emergency. Without a tremor he walked up to the entrance of the roadhouse and looked in. He thought it advisable to reconnoiter before entering, lest Mr. Flint be ambushed behind the door in readiness to take him at a sudden disadvantage. His first glance dispelled this suspicion, for his employer was polishing the top of the bar with a cloth.

"Got back, have you?" said Mr. Flint, looking at him.

The roadhouse keeper spoke so pleasantly that Tom stared at him in surprise.

"Yes, sir," he replied. "I suppose you're mad, but I can't help it. It was my——"

He was about to say "duty," but Mr. Flint interrupted him.

"Do I look mad?" he asked.

Tom was compelled to admit that he had never seen him look so pleasant, and he could hardly believe his eyes.

"No, sir; but you were mad when I left for the signal tower to warn——"

"I'll allow I was mad then; but I've got over it. I reckon you did about the right thing, and I ain't got no fault to find with you."

Tom was astonished.

"I'm glad you approve of what I did. I saved the express."

"So I heard."

"The man who chased me told you all about it, did he?"

"He said the passengers kind of made a hero of you."

"They treated me first-class. So did the conductor, and engineer, and the rest of the train. The engineer said that he probably owed me his life."

"Very likely he does if there was a big boulder on the track."

"Did the man tell you what I did to him?"

"No. What did you do to him?" asked Mr. Flint, curiously.

"Well, he came up with me as I was nearing the block and reached out to grab the bridle of the horse just as I heard the whistle of the express. I knew if he stopped me then the train would get by the signal tower, and that nothing could prevent a terrible wreck. The thought of such a thing made me desperate, so I reversed the whip I held in my hand and struck him over the head with the butt of it. He lost his balance, and fell off the horse into the road."

"What! You did that?" cried Mr. Flint, evidently astonished.

"I did. Afterward he came to the tower, caught me and was going to thrash me for it, when the conductor stopped him."

"He didn't say nothin' about it when he came back. At least not to me."

"Well, I'm glad he's gone away. I didn't know but he might try to get square with me when I got back."

"He and the gentleman went back to the village. I dunno as you need fear anythin' from him now."

"Here's your bung-starter. I'm going back to finish the hoeing."

"All right. If you hustle you may be able to make up the time you lost," said Mr. Flint, with unwonted cheerfulness, resuming his work on the bar.

At that moment three men came in for liquid refreshment, and Tom, after laying the bung-starter down on a barrel, walked out by the rear door, crossed the yard and entered the field where he had been at work when he noticed the disappearance of the boulder from its place on the edge of the embankment.

"I wonder what's come over Mr. Flint," soliloquized Tom, as he proceeded back to his work. "He seems like a different man altogether. He never was so pleasant to me before. And to think he made an attempt to strike me with that bung-starter just before I made my dash for the blockhouse. Maybe that gentleman told him that he would get into trouble if I reported that he tried to prevent me from saving the express, and he's trying to square himself with me. Yes, that must be the cause of his altered behavior. Well, I'm mighty glad he's made a change of front. He'd stare some if he knew I had \$200 in my pocket. I wonder where I'll put that money for safe keeping? I'll hide it somewhere in my room until Mr. Flint sends me to the village, and then I'll put it in the bank there."

Having settled that point to his satisfaction, he picked up his hoe and resumed his work. He worked hard and diligently to make up for lost time, and finished his work just as the bell was rung to call him in to supper. During the meal Mr. Flint asked him about what had happened at the signal tower after his arrival there, and Tom told all that transpired, omitting any reference to the collection that had been taken up for his benefit.

"Your name will be in the Cranston papers, and in the village papers, too," said Mr. Flint. "I hope you won't get too proud over it. Maybe

the railroad company will pay you 'somethin' for what you've done. You mustn't expect much, though, for them bloated corporations ain't givin' up nothin' more than they kin help. You've saved the company a lot of expense and trouble. I should say what you done is worth a thousand dollars, but if you git a hundred I reckon you'll be lucky."

"I'm not worrying about that, sir. I feel very happy to think that I was the means of saving many lives, and many others from going to the hospital."

"Yes, I reckon there would have been slaughter had the train hit that there boulder," nodded Mr. Flint. "If there'd been nobody aboard that train I should have been glad to see it go to smash."

"In that case the engineer and fireman might have been killed," said Tom.

"That's one of the risks they take in workin' for a railroad. I'm sore on the company for cuttin' through my farm. They might jest as well have gone around it and not sp'iled my property."

"You got paid for the land they took, didn't you?"

"I didn't git what I wanted. They sot a price and I had to take it."

"You didn't get nothin' for the spillin' of your land, Amos," said his better half.

"Of course I didn't, and that's what makes me mad."

"I suppose the company cut through other property as well as yours," said Tom.

"I reckon they did. Them corporations don't keer for nobody. I suppose none of your people was ever connected with one of them corporations, was they?" he added slyly.

"If they were I'm not aware of it," replied Tom.

"What business did you say your father was in?"

"I couldn't tell you anything about my father."

"Did he die afore you was born?"

"I would prefer not to speak about my family."

"Jest so," said Mr. Flint, much disappointed.

"Makes you feel bad 'cause they're dead, I s'pose. Seems kinder funny you should be thrown out on the world to earn your own livin' unless, of course, your parents was poor. Mebbe your folks died away off somewhere and left you somethin' that you never heard about," said Mr. Flint, pointedly. "Sich things have happened often."

Tom looked with some surprise at his employer.

"What put that idea into your head, Mr. Flint?" he asked.

"It jest kinder occurred to me," replied the roadhouse proprietor, evasively.

Tom went on eating in silence.

"He's an awfully close boy," thought Mr. Flint, looking at him askance. "Won't say a word about himself. I don't see no reason for him to hide anythin' from me, unless his father done somethin' that he's ashamed to tell about. I've heard of sich things, too. Mebbe his father was sent to prison for doin' somethin' ag'in the law. I've read about men goin' to prison and their folks being 'shamed to own up to the fact afterwards. Or mebbe his father got into trouble, left home and went out West to the mines, and made a fortune there, and it's just come to light, and

that there lawyer is lookin' for him to put him wise to the fact."

Mr. Flint scratched his head in a perplexed way. His inquisitive brain was bothered by all kinds of conjectures concerning the boy.

"Now if he'd only tell me somethin' that would put me on the right track, it would be money in his pocket, no doubt, and I'd make somethin' out of it, too," continued the roadhouse keeper to himself. "If he's a missin' heir he ought to know about it. If I could put him on the track of a good thing he ought to be willin' to pay me handsomely for doin' it after he got his money; but, of course, I'd first make an agreement with him. Have it down in black and white so he couldn't go back on it afterwards. Then I could make a deal with the lawyer, supposin' he is a lawyer, too. That would give me two strings to my bow."

His thoughts were interrupted by a loud pounding on the bar in the public room. Mr. Flint always kept the door open when he was at his meals so he could hear if any one came into the house.

"Somebody after a drink, I suppose," he said, as he rose from his seat. "Why couldn't he have called a little later and given me a chance to finish my dinner?"

He walked outside and saw a boy standing in front of the bar.

"What do you want?" he growled.

"A boy named Tom Tucker works here, doesn't he?"

"Yes."

"I want to see him."

"He's eatin' his dinner."

"I've got a letter for him. He can come out and get it, can't he?"

"You've got a letter for him? Who's it from?" asked Mr. Flint, with some interest.

"It's from a man."

"What kind of a lookin' man was he?" asked the tavern keeper, his mind reverting to the gentleman who had intimated that this name was Rutherford, and having some suspicion of his object.

"What do you want to know that for?" asked the boy.

"I jest asked kinder out of curiosity. Give me the letter and I'll take it in to him."

"No. My orders was to give it to nobody but Tom Tucker in his own hands."

"Do you know the man who gave you the letter?"

"No. I never seen him before."

"He was a stylish-dressed man, perhaps, with a heavy gold watch chain, and he wore a silk hat."

"No he didn't. He wasn't nothin' like that."

"Mebbe he was a thick-set chap, with a smooth face, in a business suit and derby?" said Mr. Flint, describing Hawkins.

"No; he wasn't like that either."

The tavern keeper scratched his head in a non-plussed way.

"I guess I don't know him then. Mebbe you'd better wait till Tom gets through."

"I'm in a hurry, for there's an answer to go back."

"Well, I'll tell him," said Mr. Flint turning around reluctantly and returning to the living-room. "Tom," he said, "there's a boy outside

who's got a letter for you. He wouldn't give it to me, and he says he wants an answer."

Tom looked a bit surprised, but he rose without a word and went into the public room. Mr. Flint closed the door partly to and put his ear to the opening.

CHAPTER V.—Tom Receives a Letter.

"Are you Tom Tucker?" asked the boy, when our hero came out.

"I am."

"I was told to hand you this letter," said the messenger.

"Who gave it to you to give me?"

"He didn't give me no name. He wasn't very well dressed, wore a slouch hat, and his collar was turned up so as to hide a part of his face. He said I must be sure to give this letter to you and nobody else. I'm to take him back an answer."

Tom opened the envelope, which was carefully sealed, and took out the enclosure. Turning up one of the lamps he read the following:

"My Dear Boy: You will doubtless be surprised to learn that I have ventured to come to Seacliff—the place associated with the greatest misfortune of my life, but I have just made an important discovery which concerns your future prospects. While cleaning out an old desk which belonged to your father I unexpectedly came across a memorandum which leads me to believe that the proofs needed to establish your right to the Rutherford estate, now in possession of your father's cousin, Richard Rutherford, to whose treachery I owe a life prison sentence, but from which, as you know, I escaped after serving one year, are hidden somewhere in the old Revolutionary Watch Tower still existing in a ruinous state at the extreme end of Bird Point to the east of the village. I have come down here, therefore, to hunt for the precious documents, and this will give me the opportunity of seeing you once more.

"Yours faithfully, ANDREW CRAWFORD."

"P. S.—Meet me to-night at nine at the Old Watch Tower. I will watch for your coming. If you think anything will prevent you from coming say to the bearer No, otherwise Yes. Be sure and destroy this note after you have read it."

Tom put the note carefully into his pocket and walked over to the messenger.

"Tell the man 'Yes'," he said in a low tone.

"All right," answered the boy, who immediately left the house.

When Mr. Flint saw Tom coming back he hastily returned to his seat at the table.

"Well, what did you find out?" sniffed his better half.

"Hush!" replied the roadhouse keeper.

He had found out nothing, and was much disappointed thereat. Tom resumed his seat at the table and finished his supper in silence. As soon as he was through he went outside in the yard and tore up the note. Returning to the kitchen with the fragments in his hand he threw them into the stove just as Mr. Flint came in for something he wanted.

"That note must have been important," he

thought, "for he's torn it up and thrown the pieces into the fire. There is evidently a mystery about that boy. I never was more certain of anything in my life. I wish I could find out what it is. I must go to his room at the first chance and hunt around. Mebbe I'll find somethin' that'll throw some light on the subject."

The appearance of Mrs. Flint with a stack of dishes in her arms interrupted the current of his thoughts.

"Tom," she said to the boy, "draw me a pail of water."

"Yes, ma'am," replied the boy, picking up a tin pail and going outside to the well in the yard.

The moment the door closed behind him Mr. Flint made a dart at the stove. Taking off the cover he looked at the glowing coals. Nothing remained of the fragments of the letter but a few curled and blackened whisps.

"Jest my luck!" he muttered.

"What are you lookin' into the fire for, Amos?" asked his wife, sharply.

"Nothin'," he answered a bit sulkily.

He was about to replace the cover when his sharp eyes detached three very small pieces of the letter lying on top of some soot where they had been carried by the draught. At the imminent risk of burning himself severely he made a quick grab for them, and brought them away with half a handful of soot.

"For the lands sake!" ejaculated his spouse in utter amazement at what appeared to her a senseless and foolhardy action on his part. "What did you do that for? Are you crazy?"

He made no answer, but slamming the cover on the opening, hurried away to the public room. He dumped the contents of his hand on the end of the bar, and then doused his blistered fingers into a tub of water, where he held them a few moments. His impatience to see what might perhaps be gleaned from the three scraps would not suffer him to bathe his fingers long. He dried them tenderly on a towel, then returned to the end of the counter.

Carefully separating the pieces of paper from the soot he blew the latter off the bar. Taking the three scraps in his hand he looked at them eagerly. There was a bit of writing on each. On the first he read "to-nig—", on the second "nine," and on the third, the largest of the three, "Watch Tow—." The pain of his burned hand compelled him to drop the fragments and thrust his fingers once more into the cold water, where he held it while he pushed the papers about with the index finger of his left hand, and studied the writing. The meaning of two of them seemed quite clear—"to-night" and "Watch Tower." He pondered a while over the third.

"I have it," he said, with a gleeful chuckle. "The man who wrote that letter has made an appointment with Tom to meet him to-night at nine o'clock at the Old Watch Tower on Bird's Point. That's it, as sure as eggs is eggs. The boy destroyed the note so as to prevent me or the missus gittin' on to the fact by accident. But he never counted on me takin' notice of him throwin' them pieces into the fire, or of the possibility of some of them escapin' the flames. He doesn't know I was watchin' him all the time he was readin' that letter, and takin' notice of the look on his face under the lamp. Ha, ha, ha! He doesn't dream

how foxy I am. And to think that the very pieces that would put me on the scent escaped destruction. Had they been any other three pieces they would probably have meant nothin' to me. Seems to me luck is runnin' my way. I reckon I'll be at the Watch Tower to-night myself. I must go early and get there before either of them arrive so I'll have time to look around and find a good hidin' place where I kin listen to all they say. I reckon I'll git to the bottom of this mystery somehow or my name ain't Amos Flint."

He chuckled gleefully as he wiped his fingers. They were hot and painful still, so it occurred to him to rub butter over them. He walked out into the kitchen and looked around for the butter crock.

"What are you lookin' for, Amos?" asked his wife, curiously.

"Nothin' much," he replied. "Jerusha has taken it down into the cellar," he thought, directing his steps toward the cellar stairs.

"Be you goin' into the cellar, Amos?" asked Mrs. Flint.

"Yes," he replied, shortly.

"Then take them two tin pans down there and put 'em on the shelf."

He carried them down without a word, and then plastered his fingers with butter, which afforded him some relief.

After that he returned to the public room.

"It's half-past seven now," he muttered, looking at the clock. "I ain't got no time to lose. Jerusha must wait on the customers while I'm away."

Evening was his busiest time, as most of the field hands within a mile around dropped in to drink and gossip with one another.

He couldn't help that, however.

He might never get another chance like the present to fathom the mystery which he felt convinced surrounded his hired boy, and he couldn't afford to miss it under no consideration.

"Jerusha," he said, going into the kitchen, "are you 'most done?"

"Why?" she asked, looking hard at him.

"'Cause I'm goin' out a while on business and I want you to look after the bar."

"For the land's sake! Want me to look after the bar! The idea! Get Tom to do it."

"I would but I can't for a particular reason."

"How long was you goin' to be gone?"

"Not very long."

"Well, you git back jest as soon as you kin, do you hear, Amos Flint?"

"Yes, Jerusha; I won't be gone more'n half an hour if I kin help it."

He put on his hat and walked out leaving the place in charge of his wife. Half an hour later Tom also left the house, bound for the Old Watch Tower on Bird Point to keep his engagement with Andrew Crawford.

CHAPTER VI.—The Old Watch Tower.

After a warm day, evening had set in dark and oppressive.

There was not a star in the sky, but the murky atmosphere was lighted up at frequent intervals by distant lightning, and the rumbling of far off thunder indicated the coming of an electrical storm.

These unfavorable indications did not deter either Mr. Flint or Tom Tucker from making their way toward the Old Watch Tower on Bird Point.

Both had been there before and knew the way in spite of the gloom that shrouded the landscape like a funeral pall.

The village of Seacliff was reckoned a mile from the roadhouse, and the Watch Tower was about the same distance at a right angle.

The village would long since have extended to the vicinity of the Point, but for a broad intervening marsh.

Many a hotel keeper had cast his eyes longingly on the Point as an ideal spot for a summer hotel, but a view of the marsh dampened his ardor, and he passed the site up as impracticable for that reason.

You couldn't get guests to go to a place where they could smell the salt marsh at early morn and dewey eve, and view it all day long—full of water pools at high tide, and glistening mud and rushes at low water.

The man who owned the land encroached upon by the marsh also owned the Point, and both had passed from father to son for more than a hundred years.

The present owner had been trying to sell the property for years, but nobody wanted it.

He had advertised the Point in the Boston and other city papers, and prospective buyers answered in plenty, and came down to view the place, but the marsh gave the proposition a black eye, and nobody had the courage to tackle it.

The owner made an abortive attempt to fill the marsh up, but his plan didn't work, for the tide undermined the filling and carried it away almost as fast as it was dumped in.

The people of Seacliff were forever saying it was a shame that the marsh was there.

If it had only been on the other side of the bay, which was a barren stretched of sand and rock, unsuitable for a summer hotel or the extension of the village, because it was too exposed to southeast gales, and for other reasons, it wouldn't have been so bad in their eyes; but unfortunately when nature placed it there unnumbered years since, it did not consider the feelings of coming generations.

Of all the people who had stood on the Point and cast their eyes over the marsh only one viewed it with feelings other than disgust.

That solitary exception was Tom Tucker.

Before he had been a month with Mr. Flint he had heard enough about the marsh and the Point to fill a book.

The Point was lauded to the skies and the marsh consigned to a place where it would soon have dried up had it gone there.

Therefore Tom went to see the place.

He spent two hours on the Point, and the marsh attracted a large part of his attention.

Before he left he wished most earnestly that he had a few thousand dollars and the title deed to the property.

He had thought out a plan for reclaiming that marsh which had not occurred to any one else.

There was a big fortune in it for the person who would buy the land and carry his scheme into effect.

Tom, however, had no money, and, therefore

his plan was of no use to him; just the same he didn't feel like giving any points away.

Now in the course of time, if no other bright brain conceived the same idea in the meanwhile, he might be able to buy the property and carry his scheme into effect; but it was a long way to look ahead, and the prospect was not encouraging to him.

To reach the Old Watch Tower from the village one had to go half around the marsh, which made the distance two miles, though it was actually but one as the crow flies.

To reach the Tower from the roadhouse, Mr. Flint and Tom had only to follow their nose, as the saying is, up a long lane and thence across a neglected stretch of ground, part of which skirted the marsh.

As Tom drew near the marsh in the darkness he not only could detect its presence by the salty smell, but also by the thunderous chorus of the frogs that haunted the numerous dark pools about.

All he had to do was to keep well to the right, and there was no danger of straying into the marsh, no matter how dark the night.

Leaving the twinkling lights of the district farmhouse behind him he faced the broad and restless Atlantic which beat against the rock-ribbed shore at the foot of the Tower with a sullen roar.

As he tramped resolutely ahead, unconscious that Mr. Flint had preceded him along the same path a short time before, the lightning grew more vivid, and the muttering of the thunder sounded nearer.

"I'm afraid there'll be something doing before I get back," he thought; "but what's the difference? I've all night before me. Mr. Crawford and I'll be sheltered during our interview. That old Tower has faced many a fearful storm and gale, and, if not pulled down, is likely to face many more with impunity."

As he spoke a particularly bright flash of lightning lighted up the landscape and showed him the old Watch Tower right ahead.

A long peal of thunder followed, and then the still was momentarily freshened by a draught of light wind, that died out almost immediately.

"It's coming, and coming fast," said Tom. "I hope Mr. Crawford is already on the spot. If he's much behind the time he'll surely catch a wetting."

A few minutes more sufficed to bring the boy to the gaping doorway of the Tower, and he looked around for the man he had come to meet.

Seemingly Crawford was not yet there.

All was silent inside, and nought but the roll of the surf on the rocks below broke the silence without.

If the exterior of the old Watch Tower was dismal that night, the interior was even more so.

Tom struck a match and looked around, not that he wanted to examine the place, since he had already done that by daylight, and he knew that the ground floor was littered with the rubbish of years, as well as piles of wreckage brought from the shore by boys for one object or another.

In a corner furthest from the entrance a rough stair-case led to the summit of the Tower.

Tom had been up there, and viewed the landscape from the highest vine-clad stone.

The match flared up and he saw that the room was vacant, though half a dozen people might have lain concealed behind the accumulated wreckage.

That anybody was hidden there was the last thing the boy would have thought of.

As he stood near the door, with the expiring match in his fingers, he did not dream that the inquisitive eyes of Amos Flint, ensconced behind the remains of an old boat, were fastened upon him.

"He is not here, but he will surely be here soon," thought Tom, stepping back to the door to look out.

The storm was coming on apace.

The rising wind was sweeping across the country diagonally with the sea, but as yet the lowering clouds had sent no moisture earthward.

But there would be rain aplenty before long, and when it did come it would descend in sheets.

As Tom stood in the shadow of the door looking villageward the landscape was lighted up by a blinding flash that made the immediate vicinity momentarily as bright as daylight.

Thirty yards away he distinctly saw two men walking rapidly toward the Tower.

And Tom, with some astonishment, recognized them as the two customers of that afternoon at the roadhouse.

"What in creation brings them here at this time of night?" he asked himself, in some wonder. "Have they lost their way in the neighborhood and come here to seek refuge from the storm? It must be so, and yet it strikes me as singular. I don't care to have that smooth-faced chap see me here alone. He might take it into his head to get square with me for that rap I gave him over the head. I'll just hide while they remain here. With those men on the spot it would be out of the question to hold an interview with Mr. Crawford."

Tom quickly glided behind a pile of wreckage, and crouched down.

Now he heard the footsteps of the two men, and they presently entered the Tower.

"What a beastly place!" cried the well dressed man. "Strike a light, Hawkins, and let's see what there is around us."

The smooth-faced man drew a folding dark lantern from his pocket, straightened it into shape, struck a match and lighted the small lamp within.

Drawing a slide he flashed the bull's eye around the room with the deftness of an accomplished housebreaker.

"Nothing but lumber and dirt," said the gentleman.

A tremendous crash of thunder drowned his remark. "Take a good look around, Hawkins, and perhaps your professional instinct will suggest the most likely spot in which a hunted man would hide documents of great value to him," continued the gentleman.

"I should say he was more likely to hide 'em upstairs than on this floor," replied the astute Hawkins.

"When I was out here alone the day before yesterday I was upstairs, and I found it was in too ruinous a condition to afford suitable con-

concealment for papers that moisture would in time render valueless as evidence."

"In that case, governor, I suppose we must confine our investigations to this floor. As it ain't likely that the party in question would hide any documents of value under them piles of wood, which probably wasn't here when he hid them twelve years ago, and as there ain't nothing else but dirt that has drifted in, why it stands to reason if they're hid here at all they're behind one of the stones in the wall."

"Precisely my idea Hawkins," said the gentleman. "The problem is to find the particular stone that covers them."

"My professional experience is of no use in such a case," said Hawkins. "The only thing we can do is to test the stability of the stones within reach. If none is loose, then the job becomes a mere matter of guesswork, and may turn out an endless search."

"Endless or not we must set about it."

"Why tackle such a proposition at night when daylight is more productive of results?"

"Because there are half a hundred summer boarders in the village, and some of them are to be found here every day, I have been told."

"We might come out here early in the morning. The sun is up around half past four."

"Now that we are here we can make a beginning at any rate."

"Just as you say, governor," said Hawkins.

At that moment a bright flash of lightning illuminated the room, and showed the figure of another man in the act of entering the Tower.

CHAPTER VII.—Face to Face After Twelve Years.

As the new comer stepped into the room a tremendous peal of thunder shook the tower from its crumbling roof to its foundations, and then the rain began to come down in great drops, rapidly increasing to a steady downpour which the wind flung against the landward side of the old Watch Tower. The flash of lightning which had revealed him to Rutherford and Hawkins, also betrayed the presence of the two men to his startled eyes. He was a man of medium height, not very stout, very plainly dressed, with his jacket buttoned about his body and the collar turned up about his ears, partially hiding his features. A soft felt hat was pulled well down about his eyes. He stopped apprehensively just within the threshold as darkness settled down within and without. Rutherford and Hawkins were also somewhat taken by surprise by the sudden appearance of this intruder, and for a few minutes not a move was made by either party.

Tom, in his place of concealment, knew the late comer at once. It was Andrew Crawford. Suddenly Hawkins flashed the bull's eye right full in the stranger's face. Rutherford uttered an imprecation, for he, too, knew the man.

"You here, Andrew Crawford!" he exclaimed, hoarsely.

Crawford gave a start. The speaker's voice was familiar to him. He recognized him as the man to whom he had once sold himself for money

to save his dying wife, and who afterward treacherously betrayed him. He knew, too well, that he was face to face with an enemy who would leave no stone unturned to have him returned to the prison walls from which he had made his escape years since.

"You know me," he replied in a tone that faltered in spite of himself.

"Yes, I know you for an escaped jail bird," hissed Rutherford.

"And I know you for a scoundrel who ought to be in jail," replied Crawford, with desperate earnestness.

Rutherford uttered a mocking laugh.

"Thanks, you are complimentary," he said. "So we meet again after all these years, eh? And meet here, of all places in the world. What brought you to this Tower, and at this hour of the night?" he added, fiercely.

"I might ask you the same question, Richard Rutherford," replied Crawford. "This is hardly the spot one would expect to find the wealthy owner of Rutherford Roost in at ten o'clock at night."

"I'm not in the habit of accounting for my movements to anyone," replied that gentleman, haughtily.

"Well," said Crawford, as a lurid flash of lightning lit up the room and the faces and forms of the three men, "now that we have met, and you know I am here, I suppose you will notify the authorities. I need expect nothing else from a man who so treacherously turned upon the poor guilty tool who had served him."

"You were convicted of a crime that carried with it a life sentence at hard labor in the State prison."

"I was—on your testimony."

"And you escaped after serving one."

"I did."

"What have you been doing since?"

"Trying to repent for the one false step that ruined me."

"Indeed," replied Rutherford, with a sneer.

"You may sneer, Richard Rutherford, but it is the truth. You are rich and prosperous, but I'd rather be the poor man I am, with the shadow of prison walls before my eyes, than stand in your shoes."

"You ought to have been an actor. That speech would sound very well on the stage," said Rutherford, with an evil laugh.

"I didn't expect it would make any impression on you. It would take something much beyond the ordinary to bring home to you the realization of your iniquity. I was a fool to trust you. I might have known that a man who would conspire to defraud the son of his best friend, and relative at that, was capable of any piece of rascality."

"Enough of this," cried Rutherford, angrily. "Your aspersions against my character amount to nothing. Had they had any foundation in fact I should have heard from you long ago. In fact, you would have exposed me on the witness stand if you could have proved anything against me. But you were powerless to harm me."

"You are right. I did your dirty work for a consideration, and you——"

"You say you did my dirty work, as you call

it," interrupted Rutherford, coming closer to him; "but did you?"

"You know I did," replied Crawford, in an unsteady voice.

"I have only had your word for it, and such evidence, not by any means conclusive, that you brought me. I hired you to do a certain thing. Did you do it, Andrew Crawford?"

"Can you doubt it after twelve years?"

"Answer me—yes or no!" cried that gentleman, fiercely.

"Yes. Had I not carried out your instructions the boy must have turned up somewhere in your path ere this."

"Andrew Crawford, I believe you are deceiving me—that you deceived me twelve years ago when you reported that you had executed your job faithfully. I accepted the evidence you submitted and paid you the balance of the sum agreed upon between us. For twelve years nothing has happened to cast a doubt on your statement but to-day I met a boy who is the living image of my dead cousin, John. Young Jack had he lived would have been just eighteen now. This boy was about that age. How do you account for his marvellous resemblance to John Rutherford?"

"I can't account for it," he replied. "It must be one of those coincidences that are constantly happening in this world."

"I supposed you would say that; but you can't deceive me, my friend. I suppose it is another coincidence that I find you, as well as the boy, in this neighborhood," with a nasty laugh. "How long have you been here?"

"I arrived this morning."

"Oh, you did? You tell it well, Andrew Crawford. You arrived here this morning, eh? And now I catch you here in this old Watch Tower to-night. I asked you once before what business brought you here?"

"I stepped in to escape the storm," replied Crawford. "I suppose you and your companion did the same."

A sardonic smile crept over Rutherford's countenance, though it was lost in the interval between the lightning flashes.

"Andrew Crawford you're lying to me," he hissed. "Just as you are lying to conceal the identity of that boy. Just as you lied to me twelve years ago when you told me you had disposed of him according to orders. Now look here, I want the truth from you. Own up to your deception and I—well, I'll forget that I have met you here to night, and you can go hence in safety."

"I have nothing to admit," replied Crawford, firmly; "and if I had I would as soon enter a den of wild beasts, hungry for human blood, as to trust to your word."

"That's your ultimatum, is it?" gritted Rutherford.

"That's the only answer I can give you."

"You lie. I want the truth."

"You have got it."

"Then you mean to say that the boy I saw to-day—the boy whose face is the living likeness of my dead cousin—who is employed at a roadhouse and farm a mile from here by a man named Amos Flint, who knows him as Tom Tucker, is not young Jack Rutherford?"

"How could he be?"

"Yes or no," thundered the gentleman.

"No."

A terrific peal of thunder followed the word. "You hear that?" laughed Rutherford. "Even the elements know you're lying."

"Then you don't believe me?"

"No, I don't. I have already taken steps to learn the truth, without reference to you whom I did not expect to meet to-night. Mark my words, I shall succeed, and when I do—well, you may guess what will happen."

"Is it not enough for you to feel secure as the owner of the Roost? What did you gain by the death of young Jack? Were he alive this moment how could he establish his right to the name of Rutherford, and his succession to the estate, without certain papers that his father hid the night he was shot in this Tower by a concealed assassin?"

"And that assassin was yourself."

"Liar! You know better than that," cried Crawford, violently.

"Do I? I think my testimony in court at the time of your trial shows that I saw you leaving this Tower directly after the crime was committed."

"Your testimony was pure perjury, and you know it. I believe you shot your cousin yourself."

"How dare you accuse me of such a thing?" cried Rutherford, making a spring at Crawford.

"Don't you touch me, Richard Rutherford, or I may commit a crime that will rid the world of a blackhearted scoundrel," said Crawford, stepping back and drawing a revolver as he spoke. "I repeat my accusation. To throw the sleuths of the law off your own track, and at the same time to cover up the job you had employed me to carry out, you wove a web around me that but for a missing link which your ingenuity failed to supply, I—an innocent man—would have suffered the extreme penalty of the law."

"It is false! If there was even a suspicion of truth in your words your lawyer would have seized upon the chance to save you."

"Mere suspicion proves nothing, Richard Rutherford. I believe that you were doing your best to sacrifice me, but I hadn't a particle of evidence to back my opinion up. Of what avail then to charge you with the crime? I had to leave you to Heaven and your conscience—if you possess such a thing, which I doubt."

"Have you any more evidence now?" sneered Rutherford.

"No, else you should face a judge and jury, and answer for the crime I am convinced you are guilty of."

"It strikes me you are more dangerous to my interests than I ever suspected," said Rutherford, in a cold, metallic voice.

"I wish I were. I have been free for eleven years, and during that time I have sought for the evidence that would establish my innocence and bring the crime home to you, but unfortunately you were too subtle for me. Today I have to admit I am no nearer the realization of my hopes than the day I escaped from the penitentiary."

"At any rate you are too dangerous to me to remain longer at large, so I shall see that you

are returned to your future home behind the bars."

"Perhaps you will, but I hope to disappoint you."

"You don't seem to realize that you are in my power at this moment."

"In what way?"

"You cannot leave this Watch Tower."

"You can't prevent me."

"No? There are two of us. Throw up your hands or you are a dead man," and Rutherford, flashed out a revolver.

Hawkins, who had held his hand on his own weapon during the whole interview, followed suit. Before Andrew Crawford could raise his gun he was covered by both men.

"Now, my friend, what are you going to do?" said Rutherford, triumphantly. "We call your hand with a pair of sixes. That's better than you hold. Keep the light on him, Hawkins. I think the trick is ours."

CHAPTER VIII.—In the Face of Death.

"You've got the drop on me," said Andrew Crawford, in a husky tone, when he saw by the next flash of lightning that he was looking into the muzzles of a pair of six-shooters. "I s'pose I'll have to give in."

"You'll have to give in or go out of here in the morning on a shutter," said Rutherford, grimly.

"So you mean to send me back to prison?"

"It's where you belong," answered Rutherford, coldly.

"You're the last man in the world that should say that, knowing as you do that I'm innocent of the charge brought against me."

Rutherford chuckled.

"Well, admitting for the sake of argument that you are innocent of my cousin's death still you are only getting what you deserve, for according to your own admission, and Hawkins is a witness to it, you did up young Jack Rutherford."

Crawford was silent.

"Since you have made that admission in the presence of a witness I am not sure but it's my duty to have you tried for that crime. Perhaps there would be no missing link in the testimony this time, and the hangman would get his due at last."

Rutherford spoke slowly and deliberately, as if this new idea gave him great satisfaction.

"I have no doubt that you would be glad to see me hanged if you could bring the matter about."

"What's the use of wastin' time talkin' to him, governor?" cried Hawkins, impatiently. "I'm tired of holdin' my gun on him; why don't you tell him to drop his shooter, then matters will be more comfortable?"

"Drop your revolver, Crawford, and throw up your hands," said Rutherford, in a stern tone.

"We've got you dead, and you haven't the ghost of a show to escape."

Hardly had he uttered the words than a piece of wood came flying through the air. It struck the dark lantern in Hawkins' hand and sent that article crashing to the floor. In a moment, Crawford, who had been standing in the full

glare of the light, at the mercy of the two men, was suddenly enveloped in darkness. He was a man of quick wit, and took instant advantage of this unexpected happening to save himself. With Hawkins' ejaculation of consternation in his ears he made a spring for the door and disappeared into the night. By this time the rain had almost ceased, and the worst of the storm had passed over. The sudden crash and unlooked for dousing of the light, together with Hawkins' imprecations, took Rutherford by surprise and so distracted his attention, that Crawford was gone before he thought of firing in his direction.

"What's the matter?" he cried to his companion. "What happened to you?"

"Something struck the lantern from my hand and nearly smashed my fingers," replied Hawkins, with another imprecation, as he caressed his injured digits, after thrusting his revolver under his arm.

A flash of lightning showed Rutherford that Crawford had disappeared.

"He's gone—escaped!" roared that gentleman, rushing for the door and looking out.

The darkness outside seemed intense and he could see nothing. Then another flash illuminated the landscape, but there was no sign anywhere of his man. He swore under his breath and then returned to his companion.

"What's this you said?" he asked. "Something struck you? What was it?"

"How do I know? It was something hard, like a piece of wood," answered Hawkins, blowing his cut fingers. "My hand is bleeding."

"Strike a match and see. I don't understand how anything could have hit you. There is no one in this place but ourselves."

"I'm not so sure about that," growled Hawkins. "Wood doesn't fly around of itself, I can tell you that."

"Strike a match, man; this thing must be looked into."

Hawkins shoved his weapon into his pocket, struck a match, and then both men saw the lantern lying a yard away, and a piece of wood they had not noticed before close beside it. Rutherford picked the lantern up. It was bent, and the light was out, but it was still serviceable.

"Light another match, quick," said Rutherford. "We must look around. If anybody is hiding here he has overheard our conversation, and must be attended to. We cannot afford to take the risk of having what has passed here tonight circulated around. If there is a spy on the premises his lips must be sealed."

Tom Tucker and Amos Flint, crouching behind the wreckage in different parts of the room, and unconscious of the other's presence, heard his words, and their sinister meaning conveyed a disagreeable premonition of what was in store for them if they were discovered. Flint, who did not grasp the meaning of the sudden alteration of the situation, not having seen the flight of the missile through the air in the darkness that had enveloped everything at the moment but the person of Andrew Crawford, who stood under the glare of the bull's eye, was seized with consternation, and did not know what to do.

Tom, who, as the reader has doubtless guessed,

was the person who threw the bit of wood in order to create a diversion in Crawford's favor, and thus enable him to escape from his critical predicament, realized that in helping his friend he had placed himself in a dangerous situation. He had but a few moments to decide what he should do in order to extricate himself, if that were possible.

"There's two against me, and both armed with revolvers," he muttered. "If I'm caught Rutherford will recognize me, and I'm afraid he'll show me little mercy, for already he suspects my real identity, and he will be satisfied with nothing less than my death. It's too bad they are between me and the door. They'll have the lantern lighted again before I could pass them. What shall I do?"

Then it was that he thought of the stairs leading to the ruined floor above, and he determined to risk retreat in that direction. He was near the flight, and he thought perhaps he might make his escape without being seen or heard. As quick action was necessary he lost no time in putting the plan into execution. But unfortunately the stairs were creaky from age. His weight, light as it was, brought forth sounds that drew the men's attention in that direction. The lamp was lighted and flashed upon his retreating figure.

"There he is," cried Rutherford. "By the gods, it's a boy."

He pulled out his revolver, took a hurried aim and fired. Tom felt a tug on his trousers leg as the bullet tore its way through the folds of the cloth. Two more shots followed in rapid succession, but he was not hit, and he sprang out of range upon the floor above. His situation, now that his line of retreat was known, was not improved. Indeed, it was worse, if anything, than before. He realized that he was cornered in a spot that apparently was furnished with no avenue of escape. He was surrounded with heaps of rubbish and the broken and crumbling walls of the upper story. He heard the steps of the two men on the stairs following him, and he knew that he must either surrender and meet his fate, or spring from the top of the Tower into the darkness. On two sides was a sheer descent of eighty feet to the jagged rocks on which the ocean was dashing in tumultuous confusion. A leap at either point meant practically certain death.

The other sides overlooked the ground thirty feet below, but on one of the sides the ground was littered with fragments of the ruin, and promised broken bones. Only in front, where the door was, the ground was clear, but to leap even there was to court injury likely to place him at the mercy of his pursuers. In running to the top of the Tower, Tom had not considered these facts. His sole object was to get out of the room below before a search of the place revealed his presence there. Now he saw he had run into a trap. The storm was now over, having passed out to sea, the dark clouds overhead were breaking up, permitting the moon to show herself at intervals.

Tom instinctly looked for a place to conceal himself. The highest part of the wall overlooked the ocean, and it was overrun by a dense mass of English ivy. The only available hiding place, and one that would not stand a close inspection,

was a jagged hole in this wall. The ivy was thick on both sides of it. If his pursuers had not known positively that he was up there the nook might have held out safety to him; but under the circumstances they could not fail to ferret him out of the spot. Nevertheless, like a drowning man grasping at a straw, he crawled into the place, and hardly had he done so before Rutherford and Hawkins appeared. The former carried his revolver in his hand. It still held three bullets, and if his face was an index of his purpose the prospects of the pursued was not encouraging.

"Flash your light around, Hawkins," said Rutherford, "and let us see where the boy has got to. He can't escape us. You stand by the stairs so that he can't play a march on us. I'll soon catch him."

Hawkins flashed the bull's eye all around the summit of the Tower.

"I don't see him. Where in thunder is he? There's no place up here where he can hide," said Rutherford.

"Maybe he's in that bunch of ivy yonder," suggested Hawkins.

The boy was watching them through the folds of the ivy, and when he saw the gentleman start toward the concealed hole in the wall he felt it was all up with him.

"I'm afraid he intends to shoot me," muttered Tom. "At any rate he isn't to be trusted. He killed my father. Of that I am certain, so he will not hesitate to do me up the moment he sees my face. From his conversation with Mr. Crawford it is evident he more than suspects my identity. What shall I do?"

He worked himself back through the hole till his legs hung out over the precipitous descent to the rocks and the sea. Then he heard Rutherford pulling at the mass of ivy in front. Another moment and he was sure to be discovered.

"I'll be caught like a rat in a hole," he breathed. "My only chance is to back out and trust my weight to the ivy on the outside of the wall. If that gives way I'll fall either on the rocks or into the sea. It's a fearful choice between two dangers, but I'd rather trust myself to the ivy than to the mercy of that villain who has no more heart than one of these stones."

His resolution was made and he proceeded to adopt the course he had decided on. As Rutherford pushed the ivy aside and peered into the hole he caught a fleeting glimpse of something just disappearing through the outer end a yard away. Quick as he could he shoved the revolver forward and fired. The bullet chipped a piece out of the stone an inch above the boy's head. As for Tom he slid down his frail support several yards before he secured a grip firm enough to arrest his fall, and there he hung, with bated breath and tingling nerves, between sea and sky, death menacing both from above and below.

CHAPTER IX.—Where a Miss Is As Good As a Mile.

Rutherford, conscious he had missed his mark, crawled into the hole and looked down. Owing to the darkness he could not see Tom, who was partially concealed in the dense ivy.

"Has the boy gone down there?" he muttered, listening for some sound that would assure him of the fact. "If he has his fate is almost certain. I wonder who he was? Ha!" as the idea struck him, "I am tempted to believe it was the boy Tucker. The presence of Crawford at this Tower leads me to suspect that he and the boy met here. Yes, yes that must be the truth. That rascal has lied to me all along. He did not kill young Jack as he agreed to do, and this Tom Tucker is my dead cousin's son. The astonishing likeness of this boy to John is too marked to be a mere coincidence. The heir of Rutherford Roost lives, but not for long now—no, no; if he is clinging to the ivy below he can't escape. If he should he would be more than human."

Several times during the next few minutes Rutherford was tempted to fire down on the chance of hitting the boy, or frightening him so that he would lose his hold; but he had only two more bullets, and he hesitated to waste them.

As he lay there considering, the moon suddenly came from behind a dark bank of clouds and silvered the surface of the agitated ocean. Its beams lighted up the seaward wall of the Watch Tower, and then Rutherford saw Tom's outline ten feet below him.

"I have you now," he cried with a jubilant laugh. "Say your prayers, young man, for you have but half a minute to live."

Tom looked up and saw the revolver pointed down at him. His heart jumped into his mouth, and he instinctively made an effort to burrow into the ivy. The tenacious hold of the tendrils on the stone was already severely tried by his weight, and his struggles to get out of range of Rutherford's weapon was more than they could stand. Tom felt the ivy gradually parting from the wall. He took a fresh hold further on as Rutherford fired. The bullet passed through his hat, and at the same moment the ivy gave way with a rush.

"I've finished him," exclaimed the man as Tom uttered a cry and fell down, down, clutching frantically at the ivy in his descent.

With a loud splash the boy fell into the water, narrowly missing the rocks, and disappeared. Rutherford gazed eagerly at the spot where Tom sank to see if he would come to the surface, but at that moment the moon sailed behind the clouds and everything was blotted out from view. The gentleman muttered a malediction on the moon for disappearing at such a critical moment.

"I can't see a thing," he cried impatiently. "Well, no matter. If I hit him, as his cry indicated, the bullet and the fall ought to easily settle him. In any case the water is rough, and the undertow will carry him off shore to his death."

The moon came out again, but though Rutherford scanned the rocks and the sea closely, he couldn't see the slightest sign of the boy.

"He is gone, and I am well rid of him," he said to himself. "Whether those papers come to light now is a matter of no importance. The heir is out of my path. I will set the police on Crawford's scent, and when he is safe behind the bars once more I shall be perfectly satisfied."

He worked himself out of the hole and found

Hawkins leaning over a section of the broken wall gazing down into the sea.

"You've finished him, I see," said Hawkins, with a short laugh.

"Nonsense!" replied Rutherford, fearing this man might think he had a hold on him and use it to extort blackmail at some later time. "It was the giving way of the ivy that carried him to his death. He was a fool to trust himself to it."

"Perhaps he was; but it was simply the choice between two evils. You would have shot him anyway had he remained here."

"Don't be so certain about it, Hawkins. I dare say I could have bought his silence. Everybody has his price."

"And I'll have mine some day soon," muttered his companion, half aloud.

"What's that?" asked Rutherford, sharply, with a quick, suspicious glance. "What are you talking about?"

"I said it was time we got away from here after what has happened," returned the other coolly.

"Yes, it must be late. We will return to the village at once. Come on."

And so the two men quickly descended the stairs and left the old Watch Tower to the moonlight and the roll call of the surf on the rocks, unconscious that their departure was watched by a pair of eyes, peering at them through the bushes close by. As soon as they were well on their way the owner of the eyes crept from his place of concealment and followed slowly after them to a point where the village path diverged to the right. There he paused and looked after their retreating figures. At that moment the moon, which had been obscured for a time, sailed out into a patch of clear sky, and its light shone full on the person's face. It revealed the lean and smoothly shaven countenance of Amos Flint. A self-satisfied expression rested on his features, while a grim chuckle came from his lips. Then he turned away and took the other path which led straight in the direction of the roadhouse. When Tom Tucker felt himself falling down the precipitous side of the Watch Tower he gave himself up for lost.

His flight was too rapid to give him much chance to think. Indeed, only a few seconds intervened between the time the ivy gave way and he struck the water with a splash. He went down into a kind of deep pool surrounded by rock till his feet struck the sandy bottom. As he rose, half dazed, to the surface an intruding wave carried him up into a narrow cleft in the Point and landed him upon a small patch of beach scarcely more than a yard wide. When the water subsided he sat up and looked around him, hardly believing that he had escaped death in a most miraculous manner.

"Why I'm not hurt even a little bit," he exclaimed joyfully, standing up and moving around the narrow spot. "How I missed all those rocks and landed in clear water is most extraordinary. Looking from the top of the Point straight down one would say there was not a clear spot anywhere; but my wonderful escape has proved that there is at least one such spot. No one could be more thankful than I am to get out of a

desperate pickle so easily. I had a narrow squeak for my life, but it was for a good cause. I saved Mr. Crawford from falling into the hands of his relentless enemy and mine. He'll have to get away or lie mighty low after this, for that villain will be sure to put the police on his track. Well, I must try to climb out of this and get back home. I suppose I'll have to wake Mr. Flint up in order to get into the house, and my wet clothes are bound to attract his attention and he'll want an explanation. I will think up some excuse on my way."

Tom then began the ascent of the rocks, and after some difficulty reached the summit of the Point. The sky was now clear, and a soft, warm breeze blew across the landscape. Tom looked up at the spot where he had clung for his life to the ivy, which was clear to his sight in the moonlight which bathed the vine-clad wall, and saw a long, bare place bereft of the ivy, the wreck of which waved to and fro in the wind.

"That was a fierce place to fall from," he said to himself, with a shudder.

Then he looked down at the black rocks below, where the frothy sea washed and eddied.

"To think that I went down there and escaped without a scratch!; No one would believe it. It is clear my lucky star was in the ascendant to-night," he added.

As he walked around the old Watch Tower to reach the path he saw the figure of a man standing silhouetted against the horizon on the very edge of the Point close by. Tom was a bit startled at first and paused to examine him closer. Then he saw that the man was Andrew Crawford.

"I am glad he has not gone away yet," thought the boy. "I shall have the chance to talk to him before he goes into hiding."

He walked toward his true friend—the man to whom he owed his life, and who had already spent eleven years unavailingly in an effort not only to clear his own character of a crime he was not guilty of, but to bring the real criminal to justice and secure the boy his birthright. His footsteps made no sound on the rain-soaked ground, and Crawford was not aware of his presence.

"Poor boy!" he heard the man say in sorrowful tones, as he drew near. "He has been destroyed at last by that arch scoundrel. Had I been able to interfere I would have taken any risk to save him. But I did not dream that those villains had him in a trap till it was too late to do anything. Of what use are those papers now if I found them? His death makes Rutherford the heir-at-law, and his rights are secure. I must fly this place to save myself. Villainy has triumphed once more in this world, and there is nothing left for me but——"

"Hope, Mr. Crawford," spoke up Tom, stepping forward and showing himself.

CHAPTER X.—Mr. Flint Is Treated to a Surprise.

Andrew Crawford sprang around with a start and gazed with dilated eyes at the boy.

"Jack," he exclaimed huskily, "is it you or your ghost?"

"Shake me by the hand and you'll see I'm a pretty healthy ghost," laughed Tom Tucker.

They clasped hands and then Crawford exclaimed in wonder:

"How did you ever escape?"

"I've been asking myself that same question ever since I came out of the water. It was next door to a miracle, sir."

"It surely was. I saw you fall, when the shot was fired at you—fired I am certain by Richard Rutherford, your villainous cousin."

"Yes, he tried his best to kill me."

"I knew it, though it was possible his companion might have done it by his orders. I gave you up as a dead boy, and I know how I refrained from rushing into the Tower and shooting both the rascals. Perhaps it was the presence of another man on the scene—another witness of your apparent death—that deterred me."

"Another man!" exclaimed Tom, in surprise.

"Yes. Like yourself he was hidden somewhere in the Tower, during the interview that took place between me and Rutherford."

"How do you know he was? I was in the room before Rutherford and his companion arrived, and they, as you know, preceded you. I struck a match when I entered to see if you were there, and the place was silent and deserted. If this man you mention was there he certainly entered before me, and had some object in concealing his presence. You are sure he was in there?"

"I am positive he was. When the incident happened which put out the light and enabled me to make my escape from the room, I rushed outside and dashed into the bushes expecting pursuit from Rutherford and his companion. I was surprised that they did not follow me, and stopped to consider what I should do. I didn't dream that you were hidden in the Tower. I supposed the storm had kept you away. Suddenly I heard several shots fired in the Tower, and then for the first time it occurred to me that you had been there all the time and had not been discovered. I was about to rush to your aid when a man—small and thin and elderly—slunk out at the door. The sight of him changed my impression about you. I concluded that it was not at you but at this stranger the shots had been fired, and that he eluded capture. Instead of running he hung about the door, and then he crept over to the bushes near this spot. His presence and curious actions puzzled me and I determined to watch him. I crept around through the bushes so as to come near him unawares. Then it was I heard a shot fired on the upper story of the Tower."

"I was trying to escape from Rutherford at the time. He caught sight of me as I was swinging myself out on the ivy against the wall and fired, but missed me," explained Tom.

"I was not in a good position to see what was happening up there, and the shot surprised me. I could not imagine the cause of it. A moment or two later the moon shone on the wall and then I saw you clinging to the ivy. I realized the peril of your situation, and my heart jumped into my throat. Then it was that the second shot was fired from above, and it was clearly aimed at you. You cried out and fell, and I was staggered by the catastrophe."

thin old man saw it, too. When Rutherford and his associate came out started off the old man waited a few minutes and followed at their heels. I was too stunned by your supposed death to pay any further attention to him, and in a few minutes I was alone here on the edge of the Point. Here I have been standing since, watching the water for some sign of you, but I looked in vain."

"That was because a wave carried me up into a rift in the rocks," said Tom.

"I don't see how you escaped, and without any injury either."

"I fell into a deep hole of water among the rocks, and the worst I got was an unexpected bath. As the night is warm I don't mind my wet clothes much."

"Heaven be thanked for your preservation!" exclaimed Crawford, fervently.

"Yes, Providence was very good to me, sir. Now what's to be done? You will have to fly this place at once, for Rutherford will go to Cranston first thing in the morning to start the police hunting for you as an escaped convict."

"That would spoil my plans and your prospects. I know now for a certainty that the papers which would establish your right to the name of Rutherford, and prove that you are the real heir to Rutherford Roost, are hidden in that Tower yonder, and it is my purpose to search for them."

"It is too risky for you to attempt it now, sir. You might be arrested at any moment. It is better that you go away to a distance and stay till the hue and cry is over, then you may venture back and pursue your search. A few more months can make little difference with me, seeing I have already been kept out of my rights for twelve years," said Tom.

"How can I leave you, Jack, knowing as I do that when Rutherford learns you have escaped his murderous attack of to-night he will make a fresh attempt on your life?"

"Don't worry about me. I can protect myself. I now know the man I must be on my guard against. I doubt that he could assume a disguise I could not see through; and I know his accomplice too. It is not improbable that, feeling sure of my death, they will leave the neighborhood at once. In that case I will be safe."

"It is possible you are right, but I would be sure before I leave."

"You must not run the risk of capture by remaining. If you would ease my mind, regarding your safety you must go this very night."

After some argument Crawford agreed to leave the neighborhood at once, and Tom accompanied him as far as the point where he had to branch off. There they shook hands and parted until circumstances should enable them to come together again. On his way to the roadhouse, Tom remembered he had left his window open, and he figured that by climbing the apple tree in the yard he could reach the roof of the kitchen extension, and so make his way to his room without being obliged to awaken Mr. Flint.

This plan he carried out successfully, and while Mr. Flint, after a lecture from his wife for staying out so long, was vainly trying to court slumber in the second story front room, with the recollection of Tom's terrible fall to what appeared to be certain death in his thoughts,

the boy himself got into bed in his own room on the floor above at the back, and was soon asleep. It was Mr. Flint's habit every morning at five to go to the foot of the attic stairs and yell out Tom's name to expedite his appearance downstairs. On the morning following the events just narrated he omitted that procedure. He reasoned that it would be a useless waste of breath to call a boy whose corpse was either on the rocks at the foot of Bird Point, or floating about somewhere out at sea. That Tom could have escaped after that fall did not seem reasonable enough to figure on. So he went about lighting the kitchen fire himself, which was Tom's first duty. While he was thus employed the boy came downstairs. Mr. Flint heard his step, recognized it, and his face went almost white.

Was this Tom's ghost? The door opened and the boy entered. Mr. Flint's jaw dropped and he stared at him. Then he recovered his self-possession, for there was nothing ghostly about the boy.

"I didn't hear you call me, Mr. Flint," Tom said. "Am I late?"

A glance at the clock showed him that it was only ten minutes after five.

"When did you get in?" asked the roadhouse keeper.

"Pretty near midnight, sir."

"Hum! You were out late. Where were you?"

"I went to meet an old friend who sent me word that he was in the village."

Mr. Flint was about to ask him another question, but it struck him that maybe he had better not, so he told Tom to tackle the fire and went out to the barn.

"How in creation did he escape?" the old man asked himself. "I wouldn't have given a penny for his life after that fall. And here he comes downstairs lookin' as chipper as a young colt. Why it's like one of them miracles you read about in the New Testament. Well, I don't keer. I've got on to the mystery that puzzled me about him, though some p'int's ain't very clear. I know now that his name ain't Tom Tucker but Jack Rutherford, and that chap who stopped here yesterday with his friend is his second cousin, who has done him out of his property by killin' his father—though that's one of the p'int's that ain't proved, still I reckon it's true enough, for he paid that chap who came into the Tower last night to make away with the boy years ago when he was little—I mean when the boy was little—which it appears he didn't do. The chap in question was tried for the murder of the boy's father and got a life sentence which he didn't serve, 'cause he broke prison. If Tom, or Jack, hadn't knocked the lantern out of Hawkins' hand last night, I reckon that the ex-convict would be in jail by this time on the way back to the penitentiary, instead of which I guess he's made himself scarce in this locality long afore this. It seems to me that I ought to make a good thing out of what I heard and saw in the Tower, partickerly as the boy ain't dead. My idea is to call on Mr. Rutherford and tell him what I saw, and give him to understand that if he don't ante up I'll have him arrested for killing Tom, or Jack—he needn't know that the boy escaped. It ain't likely he'll come here ag'in, and I'll see that Tom, or Jack, stays close to the farm for a while at any rate. After I've

settled with him mebbe later on I kin make some-
thin' out of what I know about the boy."

By the time he was called in to breakfast, Mr. Flint had outlined his plan of action, and two hours later, dressed in his best suit, he started for the village to call on Richard Rutherford at Squire Pryor's home on Elm street. On reaching the house he asked for Mr. Rutherford when, to his surprise and disappointment, he was informed that the gentleman had departed for Boston by the eight o'clock train. Thus was Mr. Flint's game of squeeze nipped in the bud, and he returned home in very bad humor indeed.

CHAPTER XI.—A Plucky Rescue.

Tom went about his work that day with his usual energy. When he was called to dinner and took his place at the table he saw by the look on Mr. Flint's face that the roadhouse keeper had one of his grouches on. The meal passed off in solemn silence and then Tom returned to the field. Tom thought a whole lot about his previous night's adventure at the Point, and thoughts of the Point brought up his scheme for the reclamation of the marsh. As he worked away he went over his idea in all its bearings.

"If I only had a small part of the money that rightfully belongs to me I'd soon buy Mr. Mason's property, and then I'd surprise the people around here with the improvements I'd make. That marsh would go out of business before many moons, and it wouldn't be so long before I'd have a hotel not far from the old Watch Tower. I'd preserve that old ruin as a curiosity. I'd clear away all the rubbish, and make it look like an ornament. The guests would be glad to use it as a summer house. As matters stand now Mr. Mason will sell his property cheap. If the marsh was not there it would be worth five times as much as he is now asking for it, and every year it would probably get to be more valuable. If I had \$5,000 instead of \$200 I could buy the place, and then all I'd need do would be to hold it till I got enough money together to put into execution my scheme for draining the marsh."

Then it occurred to him that the railroad company might reward him for saving the express.

"That's easily worth \$5,000 to them," he soliloquized. "I saved them a whole lot more than that. In fact if the wreck had happened, and many persons had been killed and injured, the damage would have run pretty high, without speaking about the loss of rolling stock. A hundred thousand dollars might not have let the company out. The company might send me \$1,000. I don't believe they'd offer me less than that if they gave me anything at all. However, I'm not worrying over the matter. I'm satisfied with the knowledge that I did my duty, and saved many passengers from death and severe injuries. I shan't lose any sleep if I never hear from the railroad."

As he spoke to himself he suddenly noticed a well-dressed man coming toward him from the direction of the house.

"I wonder who that is?" Tom asked himself. "He's a stranger to me. Looks as if he was coming to see me."

He stopped his work and waited for the man to come up.

"Are you Thomas Tucker?" asked the stranger.

"Yes, sir; that's my name."

"My name is Sherwood. I was sent to see you by the General Superintendent of the Eastern Railroad."

"Yes?" replied Tom.

"According to official reports you saved the Boston express early yesterday afternoon from a bad wreck through your discovery of a large boulder on the track, which fell on the track-walker and killed him, and by reporting the fact in the nick of time to the operator of Tower 10 he was enabled to stop the train before it passed the signal post."

"That's right," nodded the boy.

"Show me the spot where the boulder was before it fell."

"Come with me, sir."

Tom led him into the next field, and over to the edge of the embankment, where there was a great gap in the earth. The boulder and all other evidences of the earthslide had already been removed, and the cut looked as usual.

"How came you to discover the obstruction?" asked the railroad man.

Tom explained how he had noticed the disappearance of the boulder while he was hoeing the rows of corn, which caused him to go and look into the cut to see where it had gone to.

"Then what did you do?"

Tom told him that he had gone at once to the house, told Mr. Flint and asked if he could take his saddle-horse and ride to the blockhouse.

"He wouldn't let me have the horse because he is down on the railroad, so I jumped into a buggy I saw standing in front of the house, and made use of it to get to the Tower," continued the boy. "I reached it just in time to tell the operator, and he set the signal that stopped the train."

"You had some trouble about taking the buggy, didn't you?"

Tom admitted that he had. He narrated the facts of the exciting chase by Hawkins, and told how he had tumbled that man into the dirt as he was reaching for the bridle rein of the buggy horse to stop him. They had some further conversation, and the visitor concluded by saying that a full report of the affair would be laid before the President of the road at once, and he had not doubt but the directors of the company would vote him a substantial reward in recognition of his valuable service. Then he took his leave and Tom went on with his work. Half an hour later the bell rang from the house. It was a signal that Tom was wanted, so he threw down his hoe and started for the roadhouse.

"Amos wants to see you," said Mrs. Flint when he presented himself at the door.

Tom walked into the public room and found Mr. Flint waiting on a customer.

"I want you to take the light wagon and go to the general store," said the roadhouse keeper. "Here's a list of things to get. While Mr. Polk is gettin' 'em ready, drive to the express office and git a barrel of beer and another of liquor you'll find waitin' for you. Understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Don't lose no time about it. I'm nearly out

o' beer, and I expect several calls for it afore supper time."

Tom promised to use dispatch and walked off to the barn to harness up the sorrel gelding to the wagon. In a short time he was on his way to the village. He was about half to Seacliff when he heard the clatter of hoofs behind and looking around saw a girl on horseback following at a merry clip. The animal was as black as coal, with a white star in her forehead. He turned off to one side to give the rider plenty of room to pass. Just as horse and rider were passing a wide lane a big red touring automobile dashed out into the road, with a series of hoarse "honks" as a warning for the fair rider to get out of the way. The sudden and noisy appearance of the machine frightened the black mare, and she sprang aside and into the air, partially unseating its rider, then taking the bit into her mouth she dashed furiously down the road toward the wagon, apparently half mad with fear while the auto disappeared like a streak in the opposite direction. Tom saw the whole incident and was greatly startled to see the mare coming in his direction with the speed of an express train, with the girl hanging half off her back and clinging for dear life to her neck.

The girl was utterly unable to regain her seat, and her position was so awkward that it seemed certain she must speedily been thrown into the road. To make matters more desperate for her, her foot was entangled in the stirrup, but Tom did not know that. Tom had less than a minute to decide what to do to try and save the girl. He reined in his horse, sprang into the road, and swung his hat at the mare. She swerved slightly from her path and made a spring to pass him. Tom leaped and caught her around the neck with his left arm, and with his right hand, as he was borne off his feet and carried along, he pressed his soft hat over the animal's eyes. She flung up her head, but he held on, and in a minute or so the mare lost her stride and began to slow down. She did her best to fling the boy off, but he maintained his grip, at the same time forcing the mare's head up and back as well as he could. Blinded by the hat the animal quit running and by the time the outskirts of the village showed ahead she was under control, and then Tom brought her to a stand still. Releasing his hold on her neck and removing his hat from her eyes, Tom seized the bridle and then slipped around to help the girl. She stared at him with terrified eyes, though all danger was now past.

"Will you jump down, miss, or shall I help you?" he said.

"I can't get down. My boot is caught in the stirrup," she muttered.

"I'll boost you up into the saddle, and that may fix matters," he said.

Seeing that the mare was likely to stand quiet, he released her and helped the girl regain her seat. Then he disengaged her foot from the stirrup.

"Now you're all right, miss," he said.

"Thank you," she said, in trembling tones. "You have probably saved my life and I am grateful to you."

"You're welcome," replied Tom, regarding the beautiful girl with admiring eyes.

"Don't leave me for a few minutes," she said.

"I will stay as long as you wish."

"You are a brave boy. How did you manage to stop Bess?"

"Tom explained how he had acted.

"You couldn't have done better. I don't see how you ever did it."

"Something had to be done and quick, so I did the best I knew how."

"Will you tell me your name?"

"Certainly. My name is Tom Tucker."

"Mine is Bessie Brown. I am staying for the summer at the Seacliff Inn with my mother. Where do you live? In the village, too?"

"No; I am working for Amos Flint, who has a small farm and a roadhouse about three-quarters of a mile up the road."

"Are you the boy I saw in the wagon coming this way?"

"I guess I must be."

"Where is your wagon?"

"It's standing about a quarter of a mile back."

"You'll have to walk back all that distance. I'm so sorry."

"That doesn't amount to anything, miss."

"It was very good of you to risk your life maybe for me."

"I am very glad I was able to render you a service."

"You could hardly have done more for me. My father will be very grateful to you. You must call at the Inn and see my mother before you go back. You will, won't you? You know where the Inn is?"

"I'm afraid I won't have time. I have several things to attend to, and Mr. Flint told me to hurry back."

"When will you come to the village again?"

"I couldn't say. It is uncertain."

"But I should like to see you again soon. If I ride out to your place to-morrow afternoon with my mother can we see you?"

"I guess you can. You can't miss the roadhouse. You can water your horse at the trough and attract Mr. Flint's attention. He's always either on the veranda or in the public room. He'll send for me. I work out in the fields so you mustn't expect me to look very nice," said Tom.

"You will always look nice to me," replied Miss Brown, with a charming smile.

"Thank you," replied Tom, raising his hat politely.

"You're not an ordinary farmhand," she said, regarding him with keen interest.

"How can you tell that?" asked Tom.

"You look and act different to me. You do not seem at all like a country boy."

"Well, I must admit that most of my life has been passed in Boston."

"Indeed. We live in Boston. My father is in the hide and leather business there. He has a large warehouse in — street. How long have you been here?"

"A little over two months."

"You will go back to Boston, I suppose, before winter?"

"I don't know, miss. I'm afraid not."

"Then your people are not living there any longer?"

"I have no people, miss. My mother and father

"are both dead, and I have only one real friend in the world—a man who once saved my life."

"I am sorry," she said, sympathetically. "But you will permit me to be your friend, won't you?"

"I should be glad to have you for a friend, miss; but I'm afraid my condition in life is hardly on a par with yours. Besides, it is impossible for me to calculate with any degrees of certainty on my future movements."

"Don't think I shall ever be ashamed to be seen in your company even if you are at present only a farm-hand. You have saved my life, and it would please me to be able to keep track of you. If you are ambitious to better your prospects, my father will be glad to help you. We will all be your friends if you will let us."

"Thank you, Miss Brown. I appreciate your kind words. And now I think I will return to my wagon. Any time you should call at the roadhouse and ask for me I have no doubt Mr. Flint will not object to calling me. Goodby."

"Goodby, Mr. Tucker. Be assured we shall meet soon again."

She shook hands with him and galloped off, looking back and waving her hand at him.

"She's a fine girl," thought Tom, as he walked back to his rig. "I wish—but what's the use of wishing? Until fate smiles more kindly on me I cannot hope to have things come my way."

CHAPTER XII.—Mr. Flint Talks Business.

About three on the following afternoon while Tom was at work as usual in the fields he heard the bell ring. He stopped work and went to the house.

"There's a finely dressed lady and a gal, that seems to be her darter in a buggy out front. They asked to see you. I didn't know you knew anybody of consequence 'round here. Who are they?" he added, curiously.

"I guess they must be Miss Brown and her mother," replied Tom.

"They don't b'long here, so I s'pose they're summer folks. How come you to know them?"

Tom explained briefly how he had saved Miss Brown when her mare was running away with her the afternoon previous.

"Huh! What a close-mouthed boy you are! You never said nothin' about it at supper last night, nor today either."

"I didn't suppose the matter would particularly interest you."

"I like to hear about all that's goin' on hereabouts. Well, go out and see 'em."

Tom walked around the house and found Mr. Flint talking to the ladies. Bessie smiled at Tom as soon as she saw him.

"My mother, Mr. Tucker," she said.

"Pleased to know you, Mrs. Brown," he said, lifting his hat.

The lady proceeded to thank him for the great service he had rendered her daughter, and said she would always be grateful to him.

"And now, Mr. Tucker, aren't you the boy who saved the Boston express the day before yesterday?" spoke up Bessie, regarding Tom with unfeigned admiration.

"I admit that I am," smiled the boy.

"Why, all the village is talking about you, and everybody says you are a hero. Really I feel that it is quite an honor to be saved by such a brave young man," she said, with a coquettish smile.

"I don't think it makes much difference who you were saved by," laughed Tom, "as long as you were saved. That's the chief thing."

"True, but it's ever so much nicer to be saved by a real hero."

"I'm afraid you are flattering me too much, Miss Brown."

"I don't think I could. Mother and I read the account in yesterday's Boston paper, and it praised your presence of mind and energy highly. I am sure you are a most uncommon boy, and I feel proud of knowing you."

"If you go on talking that way you may give me a swelled head."

"No," she replied, shaking her head. "You're not that kind of boy."

Tom laughed and said he supposed pretty girls had the privilege of saying what they chose, whereat Bessie blushed and looked at the ground. During the conversation that followed, Mrs. Brown invited Tom to call on them at the inn on the following Sunday and dine with them. She said Mr. Brown would be down from Boston, and he would be anxious to meet Tom and thank him for saving their daughter. Tom replied that he would be glad to come if Mr. Flint had no objection.

"Why should he object?" asked Bessie. "You are free on Sunday, aren't you?"

"Yes, most of the day; but Mr. Flint might have a grouch on, and then he'd tell me to stay home."

"I'll speak to him," said Mrs. Brown.

She motioned to the roadhouse keeper, who had retreated to his chair on the veranda, and when he came forward she asked him to permit Tom to call on them on Sunday afternoon early, as they wished him to take dinner with them. Mr. Flint gave permission for Tom to do so, and soon afterward the ladies drove off and Tom returned to his work.

"You seem to be one of them heroes you read about in books," remarked Mr. Flint that evening at the supper table. "Fust you save a railroad train from a smashup after a mad race down the road in which you knock a fellow off his hoss that's tryin' to stop you, and then next day you save a young gal from gettin' run away with and spilled into the road. Besides all that you go snoopin' around the old Watch Tower on the P'int at night, and have a terrible narrer escape of your life from a man who killed your father, took your property away from you in some underhand way, and wants to put you out of the way into the bargain. Some literary chap ought to write a book about you."

Tom gave a gasp as he listened to the last part of Mr. Flint's remarks. The roadhouse keeper's knowledge of what had taken place at the old Watch Tower fairly staggered him. How had he got his information? He sat staring at the old man with his teacup poised in his fingers.

"Why, how did you learn all that?" he asked in tremulous tone.

Mr. Flint chuckled and grinned.

"There hain't much goin' on 'round here that I don't know," he replied.

Suddenly Tom remembered the intruder at the Tower whom Mr. Crawford had told him about.

The description of the man fitted Mr. Flint exactly. It was now clear as daylight to him that the roadhouse keeper was that man.

"So you was down to the Point the night before last?" he said.

"I reckon I was," chuckled Mr. Flint again.

"And I reckon I heard and seen a hull lot. Your name is Jack Rutherford and not Tom Tucker at all. You're the rightful heir to consid'able property I reckon, and that friend you went to meet is either took up by this time or is a long way from here. I guess he didn't have no hand in killin' your father or he'd have done you, too. That second cousin of yours—the spruce-lookin' chap who robbed you out'r your rights—is the man who done it, or I dunno what I'm talkin' about. That's the way it always is in books. I ought'r know for I've read a lot of them novels with villains jest like your second cousin in 'em, who done innocent folks out of their property or the gals they was goin' to marry; but they always got their dues in the end. Now if you'll make it an object for me I'll help you git your property back and put that spruce chap in jail."

"You're very kind," replied Tom, dryly; "how are you going to do it?"

"In the fust place I kin swear I seen him and his friend chase you up into the top of the Watch Tower, and fire three shots at you. Then I heard him shoot ag'in on the roof. Of course it was at you—who else? Then I seen you clingin' to the ivy on the outside of the wall. Somebody shot at you, either him or his friend, and you fell into the sea. How you ever escaped gits me. When I saw you come into the kitchen yesterday mornin' I thought 'twas your ghost till I seen it wasn't. I reckon that's enough to send your second cousin to jail and keep him there."

"Perhaps so," replied Tom.

"I reckon there ain't no p'haps about it. He'd go there if there's any justice in law, which I calculate there is."

"How would that get me my rights?"

"You could git some smart lawyer to turn the screws on him and make him confess all he's done ag'in you."

"No, Mr. Flint, that wouldn't work," said Tom. "And now, since you know so much about this matter I might as well tell you that unless certain papers are found which prove my birth, and my right to the Rutherford property I couldn't get it, even if my second cousin was hanged to-morrow for the murder of my father."

"Jest so," said the roadhouse keeper, looking hard at Tom. "I s'pose you don't think they're hid in that there Watch Tower?" he added, slyly.

"Why do you think that?" asked Tom, who did not want Mr. Flint to get such an idea into his head, for in that case he would surely lose no time in going there and hunting for them.

That the papers were in the Tower, Tom believed, for Mr. Crawford had told him that he had found a memorandum in his father's desk showing that they were. Tom, however, forgot that the conversation between Rutherford and Hawkins previous to the appearance of Crawford related to those papers and their intention of

making a thorough search of the ground floor at the Tower for them; and this conversation both he and Mr. Flint heard. If Tom failed to recall it at the moment it was different with Mr. Flint. He never forgot anything, particularly anything that promised to put money in his pocket.

"Why do I think they're hid there?" he replied, winking significantly at Tom. "Can't you guess?"

"No, I can't," replied the boy.

"That's singular."

"Why, didn't we both hear that second cousin of yours as good as say they were? What did he say to his friend Hawkins? I remember the very words—'Take a good look around, Hawkins, and p'haps your professional instinct will suggest the most likely spot in which a hunted man would hide dockyments of great value to him'—them were his words. You heard him say that as well as me, for you were hid behind the wreckage in the room jest as I was."

"That's true," admitted Tom, reluctantly, as he recalled the fact.

"Jest so," chuckled Mr. Flint. "I've a good memory if I hain't got nothin' else. When a man comes to a place to hunt for somethin' it's because he has some good reason for believin' the thing is hidden there. Your second cousin intended to search that room for them papers but he's given the idee up."

"How do you know he has?" asked Tom in surprise, for Mr. Flint's information on the subject under discussion seemed inexhaustible.

"Seein' as he left this neighborhood early yesterday mornin' with his friend Hawkins——"

"Is that a fact?" cried Tom, with a feeling of relief.

"It is. Probably he figgered that havin' done you up, as he supposed, it warn't any use wastin' time lookin' for them papers, since they were no good to anybody but you. See the p'int?"

Tom saw it.

"Now to sit down to business—if you make it an object to me, as I said before, I'll go and hunt for them papers for you, or we'll both hunt for them together."

"You mean that if I'll agree to pay you something you'll interest yourself in my affairs?"

"I'll allow that's jest what I mean. It's worth it, ain't it? Of course you hain't got no money now to pay me, so I don't expect nothin' in advance, or even if I should find them dockyments, but if you'll sign a paper to pay me somethin' handsome after you come into your property, I'll consider it a bargain."

Mr. Flint's proposition didn't appeal to Tom, but he didn't consider it prudent to turn his employer's offer down. Thinking to discourage the old man he said:

"It might take a long search and lead to nothin'."

"That's my risk," returned the roadhouse keeper.

Tom saw that Mr. Flint had made up his mind to butt in, believing he could make something thereby, so he gave a reluctant assent.

CHAPTER XIII.—The Deal of a Lucky Boy.

Two days later was Sunday, and at two o'clock Tom went to the village inn to keep his engagement to dine with Bessie Brown and her mother.

He found that Mr. Brown had come from Boston the afternoon before to stay over the Sabbath with his family. Mr. Brown expressed the pleasure he felt in making his acquaintance, and then thanked him feelingly for the service he had rendered his daughter.

"I shall be glad to return the favor in any way I can, Mr. Tucker," he said. "In fact I won't feel just right until you give me the opportunity to show my gratitude in some substantial way."

"I am much obliged to you, sir; but I don't think I need anything at present."

"If you will come to Boston I will give you a position in my warehouse."

"Thank you, sir. I will consider your offer and let you know if I will accept it."

"I think it would be to your advantage," replied Mr. Brown.

Tom got back to the roadhouse about nine, and found that Mr. Flint was out, and had left word that he might not return till late.

"I can't imagine where Amos went," said Mrs. Flint, in a dissatisfied tone. "It ain't like him to go out nights and stay. Then I'd like to know why he took the barn lantern with him all done up in paper, and some other things done up in paper, too. He wouldn't give me no satisfaction when I asked him. He said that it wasn't none of women's business to pry into what didn't concern 'em."

Tom said nothing though it was evident that the mistress of the house expected some expression of sympathy from him. He was at no loss to guess where Mr. Flint had gone, and what use he intended to make of the lantern and other things he had taken with him.

"He's trying to make that \$4,000," thought the boy. "Well, if he finds the papers for me I dare say I'll be able to pay him the money when I come into my property. Just the same I'd rather find the papers myself and save the \$4,000."

Mr. Flint didn't get into his downy couch till long after midnight. His search had been disappointing, and he had his usual grouch on in the morning. Nevertheless he wasn't going to give the thing up. Mr. Flint never gave anything up that there was money in if he could help it. He intended to try again, and keep on trying till he had ransacked the Watch Tower pretty thoroughly. The papers would have to be pretty securely hidden to escape him. On Wednesday morning the rural delivery man stopped at the roadhouse with a registered letter addressed to Tom Tucker, and the boy was called in from the field to sign for it. As it bore the imprint of the executive offices of the Eastern Railroad, Mr. Flint was at no loss to conjecture that it contained a reward for Tom's services in saving the Boston express. He was anxious to learn the sum the company had sent his hired boy, and watched Tom open the letter. Tom glanced first at the check and his heart gave a great bound when he saw that it amounted to \$5,000. Then he read the letter which officially conveyed the company's thanks and acknowledgement of his valuable services in saving the train and passengers.

"Well, how much did you git?" asked Mr. Flint, who had been waiting with some impatience for the information.

"Perhaps you can guess?"

"A thousand dollars."

"More than that."

"Two thousand, then."

"You're wrong again. The check is for \$5,000."

"Let me see."

Tom showed it to him.

"Gosh! You're rich," said the roadhouse keeper, looking enviously at him. "What are you goin' to do with all that money?"

"I'm going to make my fortune with it."

"Make your fortune! Why you've got a fortune, if you only kin prove your right to it."

"I know it; but that's too uncertain to build upon."

"Are you thinkin' of leavin' me and goin' into business with that check?"

"I don't expect to leave you till my time is up. That wouldn't be fair to you."

"I reckon it wouldn't. I'm glad to see that you've got the right principle. I s'pose you'll put that money in the village bank till you want to use it?"

"Yes, sir; such is my intention. If you'll let me off now I'll go to Seacliff and attend to the matter. It won't take me long."

"You kin go," replied Mr. Flint, who regarded his hired boy with different eyes since the night he learned he was the heir to a fortune, even though his prospect of recovering it was not over-brilliant.

Tom went to the bank, introduced himself to the president, and deposited the check and the cash. On the way home he stopped at Brown's inn to see the family. He was invited to stay for dinner. He did and during the meal told Mr. Brown that he would like to buy the Mason property if he could get some one to act as his guardian. After asking him a few questions, Mr. Brown offered to purchase the property in his name and hold it in trust for the boy.

Tom left shortly after dinner, and the next day Mr. Brown went to the village and in a short time had acquired the property for Tom. But no one in the village knew that the boy was the owner.

CHAPTER XIV.—The Problem of the Marsh.

The deed was recorded at Cranston, the county seat, and so the fact that Mr. Brown was indicated as trustee for Tom Tucker did not become known to the people of Seacliff. After Bessie and her mother left the village, Tom directed his attention to his property. His contract with Mr. Flint had still six weeks to run, and the old man had made him an offer to remain all winter which Tom took under consideration. He had an idea of accepting it as he wanted to be in a position to visit his property when he felt like it. He had his scheme for blotting out the marsh permanently drawn out, with plans for the work, but there were lots of details that he couldn't work out without expert advice. However, there was no doubt in his mind that the thing could be put through successfully. All it required was money, and Tom had only \$200. It occurred to him that he might enlist Mr. Brown's financial assistance, as that gentleman had several times expressed a desire to do him a substantial favor.

He hesitated, however, about broaching the matter to him, which he would have to do by

letter. He and Bessie had arranged to correspond regularly, and each week a letter passed between them. Little by little Tom took the girl into his confidence with respect to the draining of the marsh and its conversion into good, solid ground. He explained to her all the advantages that would accrue to him when this was accomplished, and said that the only thing that stood between him and success was the money he needed to do the business. A day or two before he was to give his answer to Mr. Flint he received a letter from Mr. Brown inviting him to Boston to spend a week at his home. After considering the matter he interviewed the roadhouse keeper.

"I'll stay with you this winter on the terms you have offered me provided you have no objection to me taking a week off in Boston. Mr. Brown has invited me to put in a week at his house," said Tom.

"All right," replied Mr. Flint, so a new agreement was drawn up and Tom signed it.

The roadhouse keeper then paid him what was coming to him. Tom wrote to Mr. Brown accepting his invitation and said he could come during the first or second week in November, which was the most convenient to that gentleman and his family. The second week was decided on and on the first Saturday afternoon of the month Tom started for Boston. He received a royal welcome, especially from Bessie, and enjoyed every moment of his visit hugely. Toward the end of his stay Mr. Brown called him into his library and told him Bessie had spoken to him about the marsh project, and suggested that he finance it. He said he was willing to do it provided it was feasible.

"Now I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll send a practical engineer down to see you some day next week. Take him over the ground and explain your scheme. If he reports to me that it can be done successfully I'll back you. That's fair, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir; but if you advance the money it must be considered as a loan, secured by my right and title to the property. Should the plan fail through any unsuspected obstacle that might crop up it must be understood that you are to recover what you have expended in my behalf by disposing of the property in any way you see fit."

Mr. Brown agreed to that, though he had no intention of carrying it out. On the following Monday morning Tom returned to Mr. Flint's employ full of hope over his future. Owing to the failure of Mr. Flint's persistent efforts to find the precious papers that would restore him to his birthright, Tom had given up hope of recovering them, and made only one search himself, which amounted to nothing.

"If they are really there nothing short of pulling the entire Tower to bits is likely to bring them to light," he argued. "As I can't swear they are there, in spite of Mr. Crawford's assurance, I don't like to do that."

On Thursday a gentleman called at the roadhouse to see Tom. He introduced himself as George Smith, a civil engineer, and said that Mr. Brown had sent him to look into the marsh matter. Tom took him out to the Point and gave him every chance to inspect the marsh, and see how the tide operated through it. Then he

explained his scheme for getting rid of it permanently, and showed the engineer his plans.

"It seems feasible," replied the man, "but I cannot tell for sure till I examine into the matter and verify all your findings. I will come here to-morrow, weather permitting, and give the project my close attention."

On the following afternoon the engineer called on Tom and told him that he would make a favorable report to Mr. Brown.

"The thing can be done, young man, but it will cost quite a sum. Still the benefit that will accrue to the property by the wiping out of the marsh is bound to yield a large profit which easily warrants the outlay," he said.

CHAPTER XV.—Conclusion.

In a few days Tom got a letter from Mr. Brown in which the gentleman said that the engineer had rendered a favorable report of the marsh project, and therefore he would undertake to advance the amount the expert submitted as the probable cost of the work. Tom replied that he would accept the loan when the time came to begin the work, which would not be before spring. Every Sunday afternoon that the weather was good Tom went to the Point and mounting to the upper floor of the Tower studied the marsh, and figured on what he would do with the spot when it had been transformed into good real estate. On one of these occasions he accidentally dropped his jack-knife, and it fell into a clump of bushes he picked up a badly rusted revolver, which had evidently been there for years. He concluded to carry it to the house and try and clean it. He got some oil and emory paper and started to clean off the rust. He began on the butt and his efforts soon revealed a name on the metal that ran lengthwise on it. In a few minutes he was able to decipher the letters and then he read—"Richard Rutherford."

He stared spell-bound at it, and then the conviction struck him that this was the weapon which had killed his father. He stopped further work on it, wrapped it up in a piece of newspaper and put it away in his trunk. It was the failure of the police to find the revolver with which the murder had been done that saved Andrew Crawford from the gallows. The bullet, extracted from the body of Tom's father, showed the caliber of the missing weapon, and the fact appeared in the testimony at Crawford's trial. Crawford swore that he never owned or carried a revolver, and the public prosecutor could not show that he had borrowed one. Nevertheless, he was convicted. Tom wrote several letters to Mr. Brown and one to the president of the Eastern Railroad during April, to all of which he received replies, and Mr. Flint wondered what the correspondence meant. The old man hired a new helper, but at Tom's request agreed to keep him as boarder. A gang of railroad men came down to a point half a mile from Tower 10 in the last week of April, and began building a rough track from the main line to the marsh. The news spread through the neighborhood like wildfire, and scores of curious people came to see the workers and to inquire what the track was being put there for. The foreman's answer invariably was that he did not know—he was simply following the superintendent's orders.

About this time a big tug steamed into the open roadstead at Seacliff, towing a pile driver and several scows loaded with spiles. The pile-driver was moored at the end of the marsh nearest the village. On the same day a locomotive pushed two old-fashioned coaches and eight dump cars full of refuse stone up to the marsh and left them there. One of the coaches was rigged up with cheap sleeping berths while the other had a long table and a culinary department. Fifteen laborers and a colored cook came in the cars in charge of a foreman. Tom was down at the marsh at the time talking with the boss of the pile-driver, and he went over to welcome the workmen.

An hour later a gentlemanly looking young fellow of two-and-twenty appeared on horseback from the village, where he had arrived from Cranston a short time before. He introduced himself to Tom as Fred White, an engineer sent by George Smith to help Tom carry out the job. Next morning the pile-driver began driving a double line of spiles along the outer edge of the marsh before a large audience of villagers. A space equal to two spiles was left between each line, but this was closed at every sixth splice—that is, four spiles instead of two were driven at these points. As soon as the first section of the double row of spiles was completed and closed up the laborers began wheeling down barrows full of broken stone, which in the meantime had been mixed with cement, and dumped it into the space between the two lines of spiles. The spectators soon began to understand the object of the work. It seemed clear that a sort of seawall was being erected to bar the tide from the marsh, and that the ultimate object was the filling up of the marsh for good.

The next issue of the weekly village paper had a glowing account of the plan under way, and predicted its success. The editor said that the completion of the work, and the erection of a summer hotel on the Point, would give Seacliff a boom, and he surprised the community with the news that the project originated with Tom Tucker, and that he was the owner of the Mason property, and not Mr. Brown, who had simply taken title for the boy, who had paid for it with the reward he had received from the Eastern Railroad for saving the Boston express from a smash-up in the cut.

Spaces were left at intervals along the break-water for the tide to enter the marsh and flow out again. These were subsequently closed when the wall was practically complete. The last two were closed at low tide. The work of filling in the marsh then began, and when half completed a pumping engine was put to work. By fall the entire work was done. The marsh had disappeared and no one, not acquainted with the fact, would have dreamed it had ever been there.

The news having circulated in the papers throughout the State several hotel keepers came down and Tom received an offer of \$25,000 from one for the property. He refused it, but leased the reclaimed section to a company for ten years at an annual rental of \$1,200 for a summer hotel and cottages. During the winter he was offered \$30,000 for the whole property, the lease to stand as a matter of course, the purchaser to collect the rent, but he refused it. The wiping

out of the marsh had cost \$10,000, so he was about \$15,000 ahead on his deal. About Christmas time Tom received an offer of \$25,000 for the Point alone from a wealthy man who wished to erect a summer house there. Again he refused and the offer was raised to \$30,000, but he would not take it.

Before the winter was over Tom, with Mr. Brown's help, formed a stock company which was to take title to the entire property. Tom received \$15,000 in cash and \$25,000 in stock, and was made president. A first-class hotel was put up, equipped and leased to a hotel man at a stiff price. Two years had now elapsed since he left Mr. Flint's service and Tom was just twenty-one. He was engaged to Bessie who was now nineteen. It was a summer afternoon and both were standing on the upper floor of the Watch Tower at the spot where Tom had crawled through the hole in the wall on the night of his awful experience. Bessie knew all about the incident, and it made her shudder to look down over the wall at the rocks and sea below. Suddenly some of the old stones gave way and an oblong tin case fell at Tom's feet. He picked it up in some wonder, took off the cover and pulled out two papers.

"My gracious!" he cried. "Here are the missing papers—my mother's marriage certificate and the official record of my birth. These prove my right to the name of Jack Rutherford, and to Rutherford Roost."

Next morning Tom took a train for Boston and placed the papers in the hands of Mr. Brown's lawyer, who was also the company's legal adviser. The lawyer called on Richard Rutherford at the Roost and was surprised to find him dying from a wound received an hour before at the hands of Hawkins. Rutherford made a confession admitting that he had shot his cousin John, and that Andrew Crawford had no hand in the crime. He died before night, and the Roost passed to Tom Tucker, or Jack Rutherford, without further trouble. Tom would have been thoroughly happy if he could have located Crawford, for he had heard nothing from him since they parted. On the day before his marriage, three months later, Crawford, bearded and tanned, unexpectedly appeared and announced that he had made a fortune in the West. Tom asked him to become his best man, and with his marriage we ring down the curtain on the boy who made a fortune by his wits before he came into his rightful heritage.

* Next week's issue will contain "THE STOCK-EXCHANGE BOYS OR, THE YOUNG SPECULATORS OF WALL STREET."



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Ninety Degrees South

or, Lost in the Land of Ice

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER XVIII.—(Continued)

"Science, my dear young lady," laughed Captain Essex, "has to use long sentences and involved phrases. It would not be science if it did not."

"Then science had better wake up," said Sadie, "and do something besides making folks explore the dictionary."

"Some day it will," said the captain, "and then some one will find the Pole."

"I hope so, too," said Phil, "but I am afraid that we will never do it."

The twilight grew more rosy, and the castaways were beginning to look for the return of the sun, when one morning they were suddenly most rudely awakened by a terrific crash and a shock like that of an earthquake.

The door was torn from its fastenings, masses of ice began to fall all around them, and in a moment the roof of the cavern had been torn off, while the floor began to crack in many places.

"We have grounded!" cried Phil, springing out of his bunk at the first crash. "Quick, we must get ashore at once."

Sadie was at his side in an instant, and without delay he seized her, sprang clear of the fallen ice and reached an open ledge outside.

Before him he saw some low foothills, and beyond a mountain of considerable height.

There was a shelf of rock close to the water, which was reasonably deep at this point, and toward this shelf the two now hurried over the trembling masses of ice. They reached this shelf as the water began to surge over the ice and wash away great portions of it, and not long afterward Dick and the professor joined them.

The berg began breaking at all points, much of it was carried away on the flood, and some of it fell upon the rocks and was ground to powder.

Captain Essex and Johnson presently hailed them from another part of the shelf, distant a few rods, and in a few minutes the entire party was safe beyond the reach of the waves.

"Dear me, this is rather a summary way of landing," remarked the professor, pulling the hood of his fur coat over his head, "but I think firm land is decidedly preferable to floating on the ocean."

"Our home is broken up," said Dick, "and now we've got to find another, but, at any rate, we won't pick out an iceberg the next time."

"When I was nine years on the coast of Greenland," remarked Johnson, "I once spent several nights in a whale's insides, and I must say it was a nice, warm place."

"Don't go to talking like that or we will be taking you for a Jonah," said Dick, with a laugh.

"Oh, but that ain't no yarn," replied Johnson. "The whale had been cut open on shore to find

ambergris, and I crawled inside to keep out o' the wind."

"Do you see that golden glow over the mountain yonder?" asked Captain Essex, suddenly. "I believe we can see the sun from that peak. Come, it is not very high, and we may determine the extent of the strange shore upon which we have been so rudely cast."

They all started for the mountain at a brisk walk, and presently began the ascent of the mountain.

"Why, there seems to be a regular beaten path up here," exclaimed Phil. "Evidently some one has been here before us."

"Impossible!" said the captain. "We are the first to set foot on this spot."

They said no more, and in half an hour reached the top of the hill and suddenly beheld the sun.

On top there was a level space about twenty feet in diameter, in the center of which Phil discovered a round white stone, smooth and flat on top and rising six inches above the ground.

Hurrying toward this, he suddenly cried, in an excited tone:

"Quick! Come here, all of you! I believe we have reached ninety degrees south at last!"

CHAPTER XIX.

At the Pole.

"Here is a marble slab!" cried Dick, "and there is something carved upon it."

"Dear me, dear me, looks like a chart, bless me if it doesn't," muttered Waddles, putting on his gloves.

"There's a globe with the parallels running up and down and across, anyhow," added Sadie.

"That is correct enough," said the captain, "but above it is an inscription which I cannot quite make out. It is in some foreign language, but none that I know anything about."

"H'm! Let me look at it," muttered the professor, kneeling beside the stone and bending over it, with his big spectacles reflecting the rays of the sun.

"There is a star in the center and an arrow pointing to it," continued Captain Essex. "The star marks something, and if I am not greatly mistaken, it is the Pole."

"H'm, dear me, this is most interesting," said the professor. "It seems very old. The inscription is partly in the Scandinavian language, but not at all modern. I should say it was four or five hundred years old, at the least."

"Before the time of Columbus, professor?" asked the captain in surprise.

"Oh, dear me, yes. I should say it was even older than I said at first."

"Probably old Eric, the Red, made the discovery, then," laughed Dick. "He gets the credit of everything in the discovery line, nowadays."

"But, goodness me, that would make it nine hundred," said Sadie. "Marble would not keep its surface all that time in this climate."

"I doubt if it is marble, my dear," replied the professor. "It is much harder than marble. It is some kind of whitish granite, very hard and close. The letters have been cut very deep, and

the lines are still as distinct as when they were first cut. Yes, it is quite clear that this is a very old inscription. I should put it at a thousand years old, at least."

"I've got the reppytation of bein' a putty good liar," drawled Johnson, "but 'pears to me I can't swaller all that. Here's a globe marked on the stone and lines o' latitude an' longitude, and I ain't never heard that them things was known as long ago as that. There's figures on this thing, an' an equator an' tropics. I ain't much of a scholar, but I do know that no Dutchman never cut that thing a thousand years ago, not by a good bit."

They all laughed at the man's earnestness, and Professor Waddles, recalled to himself by the same, looked up and said:

"It says that this star marks the exact location of the South Pole, and the inscription is partly in Norwegian, partly in Danish, and partly in Russian. That perplexed me, and then the thing is badly-spelled and badly constructed."

"Well, I never thought them foreigners could spell, anyhow," said Johnson, wisely, and then a general laugh ensued, in which even the professor joined.

"One thing seems to be clear, at any rate, does it not?" asked Captain Essex. "This is the Pole, and we have reached ninety degrees south, beyond a doubt."

"Beyond a doubt," echoed Waddles. "Let me congratulate you, my dear sir."

The captain took the proffered hand and shook it warmly, but then said:

"After all, it is but an empty honor. I have no means of verifying this, and they may have been mistaken. The only definite thing is that some one has been here, but if I were to say that I had discovered the Pole, I should simply be laughed at. This is just another of my many disappointments."

"Whether they laugh at you or not, I shall not," said Sadie, vigorously, "and I shall always believe that we have been to the South Pole, even if we were not the first to discover it."

"Belief is one thing, my dear girl, but proof is quite another. I am proud of your confidence in me, which is worth a great deal. However, we are losing the sun again, and it is a considerable climb down the mountain, so I think it better to descend and look for shelter somewhere in this strange land."

They found shelter among the rocks near the shore, and not far off came upon many birds, and saw traces of animals.

In the course of a few days they had enough food to last them for weeks, their house was completed and sealed with moss, they had fire and light, and food consisting of meat, edible mosses, shellfish, birds' eggs, and had recovered some of their old supplies, pemmican, coffee, tea and sugar.

Day by day the sun arose higher above the horizon, day by day more birds came to the rocks to lay their eggs and hatch their young, and with each day they were more comfortable, and might have been content but for one thought.

They may have found the Pole, and no doubt they had, but the thing that distressed them most was how they were ever going to get home without a vessel or the means to build one.

Even if they were not the first who had penetrated into this almost unknown land, there might never be others as adventurous as themselves, or if there were, they might not come for years.

They might sustain life and find shelter for two or three years, or even longer, but the chance that others might venture here was very small and scarcely to be counted on.

"Well, Johnson," said Phil one day, determined to keep up a brave and a cheerful front, "it seems quite likely that you may add another fifteen or twenty years to your record of times and places, for there seems little likelihood of our getting away from here very soon."

"Well, I dunno, sir," replied the sailor. "You said you didn't believe we'd ever reach ninety degrees south, but we're here, for all that."

"Yes, I suppose we are," laughed Phil, "and I will give in beaten on that score, but how are we going to get away?"

"If we could get skins of these birds enough and some gas we might make a balloon and get away in that," suggested Johnson, gravely, at which they all smiled.

"I am not certain that it would not be feasible," said the professor. "The skins can be stretched, there is gluten in the nests to spread over them and make them air-tight, and if we have no gas, hot air has been found to be a very good substitute, and by making several landings we might——"

"Very good in theory, professor," interrupted Essex, "but I am afraid you would find the practice quite another thing. Have you considered the distance we would have to travel? No, I don't think I would want to trust to anything less than a stout ship to carry us away from this land of ice."

"And that we will ever find one is as likely as that our balloon would float, even if we made it," added Phil.

Days passed, the sun arose higher and higher every day, the air was less cold, more birds and animals appeared, the bergs seemed to be disappearing, carried away by northerly currents, and the short Antarctic summer seemed to be at hand.

Every day they went on long excursions in search of food, or in the hope of making new discoveries, and on one of these they had come out upon the summit of a low hill, when Phil suddenly pointed out upon the ocean, and in a voice that showed his intense excitement, cried:

"Look there, look there! You were right—we shall be saved; there is relief at hand, for there is a ship!"

For a few moments the boy's friends thought he must be mad, but at length the captain said:

"Yes, it is a ship, but she carries no sails, and some of her masts are broken. It is nothing but a wreck that has drifted into these unknown seas."

"She floats," returned Phil, "and if she has not all her masts, can be made to carry us away from here. How she came here we do not know, but we must not give up hope until we see what she will do. She has been sent here for our relief, and we must not despise any means of escape."

(To be continued.)

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

EGGS SOLD AT 18 CENTS A DOZEN

The further an egg travels the more it is worth, no matter what its age may be, a letter received by Mirian Fairbanks, aged 14, of Monticello indicates.

A few months ago while helping her father to pack eggs for the Eastern market, Mirian wrote her name and address on an egg, with the request that the buyer write what he paid for it.

This week Mirian received a letter from Beatrice Ganis, 14, of 144 South Fourth Street, Brooklyn. Her father had bought the case of eggs and he paid 60 cents a dozen for them.

Mirian's father sold them for 18 cents a dozen.

PROPOSES AN ATONEMENT DAY FOR ALL NATIONS ON FEB. 29

An international holiday on the extra day of every leap year, February 29, is suggested by the Rev. J. Henry Hornung, pastor of the United Congregational Church here.

On this day, Mr. Mornung proposes, the nations of the earth should voluntarily right the wrongs which they realized they had committed against other countries during the previous four years.

"An honorable man, when he has committed a wrong, will confess it and attempt to make it right," the minister says. "Why cannot Governments, which are only the instruments of men, take the same attitude?"

LIPTON WOULD GIVE TROPHIES TO CAPTURE THE AMERICA'S CUP

Sir Thomas Lipton would give his most prized sailing honors for the famous yachting trophy—the America's Cup. Sir Thomas was the guest of honor here recently at the Breakfast Club, and the jovial yachtman whose Shamrocks have challenged for the cup for nearly three decades, said:

"I've the largest and costliest collection of silver cups in the world, but I'd trade them all for the mug." He was referring to the America's Cup, which he will challenge for again in 1929.

1,000,000 USE TUNNEL

Holland Tunnel officials estimated yesterday that to date over 1,000,000 vehicles will have passed through the tunnel, which was opened November 13.

The daily average traffic for the first six weeks of the tunnel's operation was 19,775, with daily average receipts of \$10,406. Trucking, according to the records, has increased 2 per cent. over the percentage figures for the first 500,000 vehicles.

Tunnel police records showed that up to noon yesterday forty motorists had run out of gasoline in the tunnel and had been supplied by the tunnel police, and ninety-two vehicles had broken down and been towed out. Twenty-three drivers were arrested in the tunnel for reckless driving or disorderly conduct. Twenty-nine summonses for disorderly conduct or failing to keep in line were handed out by the tunnel officers.

OLD GERMAN CASTLE IS DESTROYED AGAIN

Schloss Affing, an old landmark in Augsburg, Germany, dating back to the eleventh century, was recently destroyed by fire. Legend has it that on the site of the castle a Roman camp once stood. The castle changed hands many times during the Middle Ages. Members of the House of Wittlesbach, later the rulers of Bavaria, were at one time owners of Schloss Affing.

Albert Achilles, Elector of Brandenburg, burned the castle in 1462. It was rebuilt. Razed again in the Thirty Years' War, it was rebuilt in 1684. This time the main building is said to have been completely destroyed, although the local fire brigade managed to salvage much of the furniture and other valuables. As the great tower of the castle gave way and fell among the burning debris five firemen were killed and ten injured.

Many of the romantic episodes in tales of the House of Brandenburg took place in the vicinity of this castle, which was one of the finest remaining examples of a medieval German stronghold.

THE CHILD BEGGARS OF PEKING

Even Cairo and Naples cannot compare with Peking in the number and persistence of the professional beggars who swarm upon the streets and annoy strangers with their supplications. In Peking the casual tourist will do well to buy a "small dime" coppers before he goes out—that means twenty-eight coppers—and to distribute a copper here and a copper there. It purchases immunity from annoyance.

The permanent resident obtains immunity only by being as "hardhearted" as the Chinese themselves—and never giving. If one lives in Peking for a time and maintained a 'ricksha boy and several servants, one's doorway will not be bothered, for the magical words "ta boo gay"—"He nothing gives"—spread rapidly. Recently the doorways of the foreign hotels were besieged by swarms of ragged little girls of 8 or 10 years, each carrying a tiny, wailing, naked infant, supposedly their starving little sisters. As a matter of fact, these little begging girls are all hired, as are also the infants, by fat, sleek men who control this beggar ring and prey upon ignorant foreigners.

An Awful Collision

I ran an engine on that same Gulfport & Bilford road.

I suppose Baisley remembers Colonel Pinkerton?

Baisley remembered him perfectly, though the gentleman had not come into power in his time.

The colonel was about as reckless a man as one would be likely to find, even in a day's journey in the "Paradise of Rogues."

He had been president of a bank somewhere in the North, and in due time became the president of the railroad company.

In his younger days he had partly learned the trade of a machinist, and in consequence he believed that he knew more about a locomotive than any other man on the road.

He was mad if a train was two minutes behind time, and as he had appointed all the conductors himself, he charges the blame upon the engineers.

He lived at Buckvale, where he had a very nice place, built on the line of the road, so that he could tell at what time every train passed it.

"Romsey, you are late," said Colonel Pinkerton to me one morning as I stopped my train at the Buckvale station.

"Two minutes, sir," I replied meekly, as I looked at my watch.

"Five minutes!" retorted the colonel sharply.

"It is only two minutes by my watch, which was right by the company's time in Bilford this morning."

"Don't contradict me, Romsey! You have said enough! There is a better man than you are that wants your place," he continued, as he turned on his heel and left me.

I knew about this man that wanted my place.

He was a relative of Fling, the conductor on my train.

He had been sent for when he was not needed because he was out of a job at home, and men were more plenty in that State than in Baisley's time.

I could not afford to lose my situation, and for this reason I "ate dirt" more than is natural for me.

The next day I came into Buckvale on the moment.

Colonel Pinkerton was at the water tank with his watch in his hand. He and Fling were on the best of terms; and I know that both of them were anxious to make a place for the newcomer. But I had the good-will and support of all the engineers, and they knew it was not prudent to discharge me without some show of reason.

"You are three minutes behind time, Romsey," said the colonel, with a heavy frown on his face.

"I thought I was exactly on the moment," I ventured to reply.

"I say you are three minutes late."

"Will you be so kind as to give me the exact time, Colonel Pinkerton? I think your time differs from that of the company at Bilford," I continued very respectfully.

"I have the right time; and it is your duty to

have it also," he replied, putting up his watch, and walking away.

But of course I could see that his time was three minutes faster than mine.

As it was, I was three minutes ahead of the up train, which usually took the siding for my train to pass it at this station.

"What time are you, Mr. Fling?" asked the conductor, before we left Bilford the next morning.

"Eleven minutes of seven," he answered, after consulting his watch.

"You are three minutes fast," I added.

"I am just right," he persisted, hurrying away from me as though he did not wish to have the difference between our watches investigated.

It seemed to me that he was a party to the president's plan for getting rid of me. But I noticed that he gave me the signal to start three minutes late by his own watch, though by the right time, according to my own.

"Make all the steam you can, Blunt," I said to the fireman as I pulled out the throttle.

I kept on all the pressure my gauge would allow, and reached my first stopping place five minutes ahead of my own time.

It was but three miles more to Buckvale, but Fling did not give the word for me to start till three minutes behind the time by my watch.

I could see no reason for this delay, and I don't think there was any.

I crowded the machine to the utmost of its capacity, for I had an upgrade against me, and a rather heavy train.

I stopped the engine at Buckvale just three and a half minutes ahead of the true time.

"You are ahead of your time, and that's worse than being behind," growled Colonel Pinkerton, evidently disappointed.

"I thought I must be about right by your time, sir," I replied.

"I don't want any words about it," snapped he. "There is a lady on this train who has to take a steamer at Gulport five minutes after it is due there; if you are late it will be the last train you ever run on this road," continued the colonel. "Now go ahead, and don't lose another minute here."

"I haven't the conductor's signal to start yet." I remonstrated.

"You have my order! Start your engine!" roared the president, who was in the worst humor possible.

"But the up train has not arrived yet, sir," I suggested, appalled at the idea of going ahead while the other train was entitled to the track.

"Are you the president of this road, or am I?" demanded the colonel.

"Certainly I am not the president."

"I am; and every man on the road obeys me, or he leaves at once."

At this moment Fling appeared with his watch in his hand.

He seemed in doubt, but in a moment more he gave the order to start.

The up train was certainly late.

It was usually on the siding when I came in.

"We haven't waited five minutes for the up train, Mr. Fling," I objected, when I saw the signal

"Yes, we have; just five minutes," he replied, look at his watch again.

"Time up; will you go ahead, Romsey?" demanded the conductor, who felt that he was acting in the presence of the president.

"No, sir; I will not!" I answered decidedly. "I will not cause a collision when I know better."

"Very well, Romsey! You are discharged for disobedience of orders! The engineers don't run this road," interposed Colonel Pinkerton. "Here, Walker, jump into that cab and run this train down to Gulfport."

This remark was addressed to the man who had come down as the relative of the conductor to obtain my situation.

"Colonel Pinkerton, I heard that your son was on the up train, and if you mean to kill him and the lady you spoke of, you will do it," I had the pluck to say as I stepped off the footboard.

"None of your impudence, Romsey! If you work on this road you must obey orders," answered the president, as he jumped upon the forward car, as it came up to the spot.

I had something more to say to him, and I followed him into the car.

I did not think the train would go far, and I hoped the new engineer would hear the up train in season to stop his machine and avoid a collision.

As I had been discharged I gave Colonel Pinkerton a liberal piece of my mind in the presence of the passengers.

He was mad, and they were indignant at my plain use of words.

I told them the president was risking the life of every person on board of the train to oblige the lady to whom he was engaged to be married.

He was a widower, with one son, and it seemed that he intended to accompany his lady down to Gulfport.

His son was a lad of ten, whom I knew well, for he often came to see me on the engine.

The passengers threatened to lynch me for what I had said to the colonel.

Before I was aware that they meant what they said, half a dozen of them seized me in such a way that I could not defend myself.

In spite of my struggles they hurled me from the platform of the rear car, to which I had followed the colonel, into a sand bank at the side of the road.

Fortunately it was a sand bank, and the train had slowed down considerably in rounding a curve, and I was not harmed by my fall.

I regained my feet, but I had hardly done so before I heard an awful crash.

The train from which I had been uncere- moniously cast had come into collision with the up train.

I hastened forward as fast as possible, though I found I was very stiff from the effects of my fall.

The two trains had struck each other just beyond the curve.

There was nothing to be seen of either of them but a mass of ruins.

Before I reached the spot I saw Blunt limping towards the scene of the disaster.

He had seen the approaching train, and had leaped from the engine on the instant.

He was not very badly injured, and he walked with me to the wreck.

I should say that one-half of the passengers were either killed or badly wounded.

About a dozen seemed to be uninjured, though I could not see how a single one escaped instant death.

Walker, the new engineer, was killed, but both the engineer and fireman had leaped from the machine on the up train.

I looked among the ruins for Henry Pinkerton, the president's son.

I found him with a leg and an arm broken.

His father was terribly battered; but his life was saved, leaving him a cripple for the rest of his days.

Miss Clifford, the lady to whom the colonel was engaged, was killed, and probably did not know what hurt her.

I worked with all my might for four hours, and till the next train for Bilford came along.

I helped out from the pile of ruins that held them down, several of the passengers who had assisted in throwing me from the train.

They had changed their tone.

The indignation against the colonel and Fling was very bitter when all the facts came out, and I was a sort of lion for a while.

The president was deposed at once, and I was restored to my situation.

I was called upon no more to eat dirt on that road, and the president was always rightfully regarded as the author of "An Awful Collision."

MOTOR CARS DISPLACE HORSES AT VATICAN

The irresistible march of modernity has made itself felt even inside the Vatican, which, though the most conservative and most traditional institution in the world, is obliged every now and then to make concessions to the twentieth century craving for speed.

Pope Pius has decided to abolish all horse-drawn vehicles at the Vatican, replacing them with motor cars and motor trucks it was announced recently. Thus the ancient means of transport, which for centuries has supplied all the needs of the Holy See, has been cast into the outer darkness and purring motors have been substituted.

The magnificent and historic state coaches which once formed the pride of the Pontiffs, are now fit only for museums. The stables are to be transformed into garages and many imposing coachmen whose powdered wigs and corpulent figures formerly drew all eyes, must now turn their hands to other occupations.

The transformation began soon after the present Pope's elevation to the chair of St. Peter, when a group of admirers at Milan presented him with a motor car in which the Pontiff took daily drives in the Vatican gardens, instead of using the traditional coach. The first gift of a motor car was soon followed by another.

This Christmas Pope Pius received a fine American car from an American admirer.

Now that it has been decided to completely abolish all horse-drawn vehicles, it is understood that the Vatican proposes to purchase a fleet of ten motor cars and motor trucks.

GOOD READING

NEW CHICAGO BRIDGE APPROVED BY U. S.

Plans for a bridge over the Chicago River at North Clark street, Chicago, have been approved by Assistant Secretary of War Macnider, it was announced recently.

NO ROUGE PUPILS, CASTOR OIL IS PENALTY

The ten girl members of the senior class of Woodfin High School have adopted a New Year resolution not to make use of rouge or lipstick in any way for a period of twelve months.

Punishment for violation has been fixed as follows: First offense, the culprit will have her face washed with laundry soap; second offense, the girl will be held under a shower bath until subdued; third offense, the victim will be forced to swallow at least two tablespoons of castor oil; fourth offense, ostracism from other members of the class for two weeks.

The four boys in the class have coted to help the girls carry out their resolution.

RUNAWAY SNOWBALL DEMOLISHES COTTAGE

A runaway snowball that gained a diameter of nearly thirty feet as it rolled down a steep hill a quarter of a mile demolished an expensive summer home on the bank of Black River belonging to Walter Dangers, merchant, of this city.

Mr. Dangers, who has achieved considerable local reputation as a sculptor, set out to carve a snow statute of Lincoln on the crest of the hill overlooking his cabin and was rolling a huge snowball to be used as the base of the image when it broke away from him and started down the hill.

The snowball, weighing tons, continued about fifty feet after splintering the cottage and plunged over a twenty-foot embankment. It broke up when it landed on the ice of the river below.

PARIS SUBWAY GIVES EXCUSES FOR RIDERS LATE FOR WORK

Subway excuses are furnished passengers on the French underground system delayed from arrival at work at a specified time by stoppage or delay of train service. The old alibi of "train late" doesn't go down with the hard-hearted French employer unless accompanied by an official yellow ticket stamped with the date and the name of the station at which the delay occurred. The tickets are furnished by subway and railway officials on request.

Many French business houses take from their employes' salary sums proportionate to losses incurred through tardiness of staff members. When salaries of \$25 and \$30 a month are paid, as is frequently the case, a few minutes' tardiness can eat heavily into earnings.

FROGS ENLIGHTEN SAVANTS, THEN TICKLE THEIR PALATES

Fifteen Louisiana bullfrogs having completed their contribution to science by serving as a bio-

logical exhibit at the convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, were cooked and submitted to the palates of twenty-five scientists.

They were, of course, scientific bullfrogs, aristocrats of the species, and they weighed about 2½ pounds each.

They had served as prominent members of an exhibit of "wet land" products of Louisiana.

The records of Percy Viosca, Jr., State Director of Fisheries, show that more than 1,000,000 frogs, for which hotels pay about \$1 a pound, have been shipped out of the State since the beginning of the year.

PRE-WAR SEAPLANE FOUND

A relic of pre-war days of aviation, a Curtiss AH-8 seaplane, was recently found crated in the Washington Navy Yard, and is being assembled at the Naval Air Station at Anacostia.

The "walloping window-blind," as this type of plane was named by pilots and mechanics, who tried it out in 1914 at Hammondsport, N. Y., and Pensacola, will serve to demonstrate to the flying fraternity the strides that airplane construction has made since the war.

The plane was delivered to the Navy Department in 1916, just when it was being abandoned in favor of the N-9 "tractor." The materials in the craft are in a remarkable state of preservation, considering the time in storage.

So far as it is known, this is the only AH-8 plane remaining in the military service. The pilot and his observer sit side by side, in front of the wing structure. A shoulder yoke controls the ailerons, and the foot throttle, obsolete in later planes, is used. The only security for the two passengers is shoulder-straps.

GERMAN POLICE HEAD MAKES 'CRIMINAL SHOES'

A Commissioner of Police in Magdeburg, Germany, has invented a "criminal's shoe" which is to prevent the escape of prisoners. It is a kind of slipper made of steel that closes automatically. The slipper, which is lined with felt, is pulled on over the stocking, and cannot be detected by the casual eye. In closing, it automatically adjusts itself to the ankle.

The steel of which it is made is proof against any file, and even a locksmith is powerless to open the shoe without a key. Construction of the shoe is such that the ankle of the criminal is held stiff, so that he can only walk an ordinary measured pace. Running and jumping are impossible. A criminal wearing such a shoe cannot escape even from a cell whose windows are unbarred.

The invention is expected to prove particularly useful for the transport of criminals, where a body of violent men is usually in charge of one or two officials.

CURRENT NEWS

ORIGIN OF CHOP SUEY REMAINS A MYSTERY

The serving of chop suey, chow mein and other Oriental dishes forms a great industry in the United States, few cities and towns being without at least one Chinese restaurant.

The origin of these concoctions, however, is a mystery. Though they are made of celery, bamboo shoots, mushrooms and rice in a seemingly Oriental manner, there are differing opinions as to whether chop suey, for example, is a real Chinese dish or an American's conception of one.

OIL ROYALTIES FOR OSAGES ARE BEGINNING TO DECLINE

Comparative poverty has come to the Osage Indians, for the last quarterly distribution of oil royalties gave each member of the tribe only \$1,400.

The oil wealth of the tribe is beginning to decline and the Federal Government, guardian of the Osages, is taking steps to adjust their standard of living to their reduced incomes which exceeded \$15,000 annually for individual tribesmen during the last seven years.

The first step of the Government in this direction was to limit to \$2,000 the factory list price of the new automobiles which the Indians may purchase. Thus "poverty" affects a proud race which traveled from coast to coast in expensive limousines.

Almost \$240,000,000 in oil and gas leases and royalties have been paid to the Osages in seven years.

ENGLISH TOWN IS STIRRED BY "ONE-CHILD" HOUSE SCHEME

Oldbury's one-child house has kicked up a fine row here.

Some of the rate payers, at special meetings, have characterized the Town Council's plan "as an insidious form of birth control."

The councilors' idea in ordering a series of houses for couples with not more than one child was to aid in relieving the housing shortage, as they took the view that with limited means at their command, it was better to have smaller houses and more of them.

The Council contends that if and when the families increase the tenants must give up possession of the one-child houses. The point is made that if a father thinks he is able to provide for two children he should also take into consideration the fact that larger quarters are necessary, and therefore move into a residence with more rooms.

FOES OF GERMAN JAZZ OPERA EMPLOY SABOTAGE IN THEATRE

Opponents of jazz in opera recently threw a monkey wrench into the machinery for the performance at Cassel of Ernest Krenek's jazz opera, "Johnny spielt auf."

Krenek's opera has been greeted with mingled applause and hisses wherever it has been given, but has remained on the répertoires of Dresden,

Breslau, and Berlin despite the protests of adherents to the classical type of opera.

At Cassel, however, the anti-jazz faction resorted to sabotage. During one of the scenes an express train is supposed to move across the stage. It is set in motion by pulling a wire cable. When the moment came for the train to move, it failed to function. The stage hands found that the cable had been cut by some unknown person.

This was the signal for the anti-jazzers to start a rumpus which made further performance of the opera impossible.

About 11,000 students will be enrolled for extension courses at Columbia University for the Spring session recently by Registrar Edward J. Grant. During the Winter session 7,832 students were registered, and an additional enrolment of about 3,000 is expected for Spring classes. This total will exceed all previous figures. The registration dates are Feb. 2-18.

Among the 600 courses to be offered are many new ones, according to Professor James C. Egbert, director of university extension. They will include advertising agency procedure; lectures, readings and discussions of contemporary Latin America; economics of fashion, building management, Japanese art, palatial differential equations, consumers' cooperative movement and others.

Extramural courses will be offered in four new places: Bridgeport, Conn.; East Orange, N. J.; Stamford, Conn., and Orange, N. J. Afternoon and evening classes already are being held in Newark and Brooklyn.

RARE PROPHEPIC CARTOONS

Striking cartoons showing weird prophecies of the future are contained in a collection of "Punch's Pocket Books" and "Kate Greenaway's Almanacs and Calendars," recently placed on exhibition in the Treasure Room of the Widener Library of Harvard University.

The collection of tiny volumes, dating from 1844 to 1860 and published in England, contains comic cartoons which seem to concern themselves to a marked degree with topics of equal or greater importance today than at their time of issue. Many of the cartoons are highly decorative colored engravings.

One set of drawings is entitled "The Progress of Bloomerism, or a Complete Change," and another shows a series of "Swimming for Ladies." The figures depicted by the engraver, John Leech, show that the costumes represented what the younger generation would do despite the protests of their elders.

Other drawings entitled "The World on Wheels," published in 1879, view the approach of the time when the highways would be filled with riders, only in this case on two wheels instead of the present-day four. A striking prophecy is contained in the engraving of 1846 on "Hyde Park as It Will Be," but the automobiles are propelled by steam and resemble small locomotives.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

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